Curriculum Summary

Writing

Subject Intent

Writing is valuable both in education and wider society. To write confidently and fluently for a range of purposes is a vital skill, which will prepare pupils to write throughout their life. At Gorsefield, we immerse children in a range of high-quality texts to inspire a love of reading and writing, as well as developing a dynamic range of vocabulary and progressive grammar skills. We support children to develop a joined, legible and increasingly efficient handwriting style.

Disciplines of Writing

			
Composition	Grammar	Spelling	Handwriting

Structure

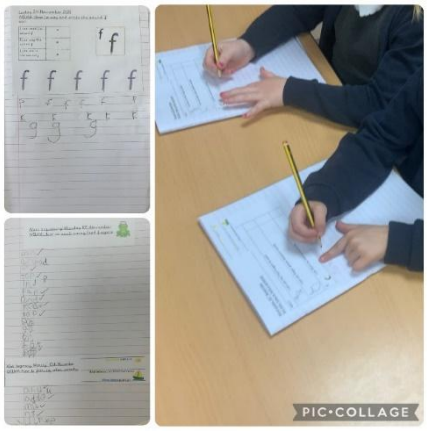
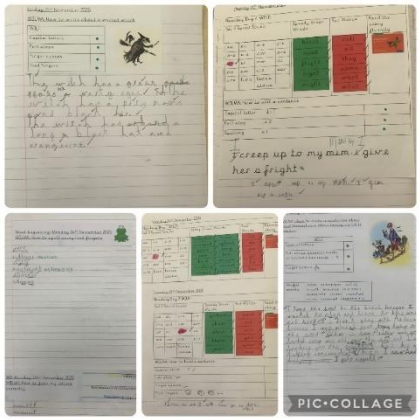
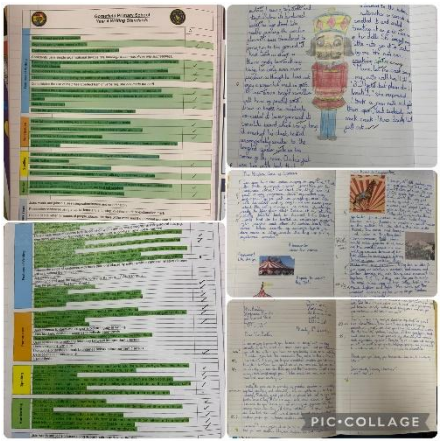
Gorsefield follows the RWI scheme for phonics, which enables all children to read and write sounds through a carefully prescribed programme. This is taught discretely in Early Years and KS1 through assessed groups, where children can apply the sounds they have been taught through handwriting, spelling and constructing sentences by holding, building and editing. Separate writing lessons are taught alongside the RWI programme, using the class text as a stimulus.

In Early Years, the primary focus is to ensure that children are 'ready to write'. A careful assessment of children's shoulder, elbow and wrist pivot, as well as their core strength and pencil grip, is held half-termly. This valuable assessment directly influences the provision in place for our children. This is reassessed every half-term. Pupils are taught to write Set 1 sounds through RWI lessons, but there are ample opportunities to explore writing through discrete lessons and within provision. Children's writing journey is carefully mapped by teachers to identify their progress and next steps.

In Year 1, writing is structured in a two-week cycle. In the first week, children are exposed to a new text, as well as being discretely taught composition and grammar skills linked to a focus text type. This is explored further in the second week, where children identify the core features of the genre, plan their own example and write and edit their own work. In Year 2 to 6, a similar structure is used, however this is extended over three weeks. In the first week, pupils familiarise themselves with a new purpose for writing and genre, learning the essential grammar and composition skills directly linked to this text type. In the second week, children plan and write their own using an adaptive teacher model and scaffold to guide the writing process. The third week sees pupils plan and write for a similar purpose and genre, with a reduced scaffold. Child edit their writing throughout this process.

Children are taught spelling discretely through the RWI spelling scheme for approximately three, 15-minute sessions each week. Children are also taught handwriting: for EYFS and Year 1 children, this is closely aligned to the RWI scheme. From Year 2 onwards, the 'lead in' of letters is taught, ready for pupils to develop a cursive style from Year 3 onwards.

Writing Examples

EYFS	KS1	KS2
		

Writing and Disciplinary Concepts within Rising Stars and Rapid Risers

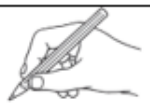
Our curriculum in Rapid Risers and Rising Stars is based on a child-centred, tailored, specific and individualised approach to learning and teaching. Whilst recognising that children who access our internally enhanced provisions are not accessing the National Curriculum, the Equals curriculum has been developed so that key foundational disciplinary concepts are still a part of their curriculum to ensure they are developing foundational knowledge to support them in acquiring the knowledge skills and key concepts that feature within the national curriculum. Our curriculum focuses on the holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs and embraces a healthy balance between explicitly taught knowledge and concepts through adult-directed activities, and ensuring children have opportunities to develop through child-initiated play.

Rapid Risers: Semi Formal Curriculum

Rapid Risers follow Getting Ready to write *(Alistair Bryce Clegg 2013)* through my Independence within the Equals semi-formal curriculum. In Autumn 1 we focus on the shoulder pivot, Autumn 2 focuses on the elbow pivot and in Spring 1 focuses on the wrist pivot. Mark making opportunities are provided daily within provision and explored in a multi-sensory approach that enables children to mark make on both vertical *(Madelyn Giradi, OT NESCA 2020 & Lauren Drobnjak 2025)* and horizontal surfaces.

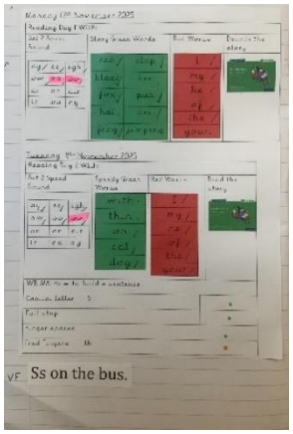
Daily Dough Disco provides opportunities to develop hand strength and pre-writing skills. As identified in the EYFS statutory framework 2025 & Development matters, Physical development and opportunities to develop gross motor is also pivotal in developing the skills needed before writing and Equals accounts for this throughout its multi-sensory approach across all areas of Equals. When children begin to mark make their grip development journey is also assessed and tracked see below:

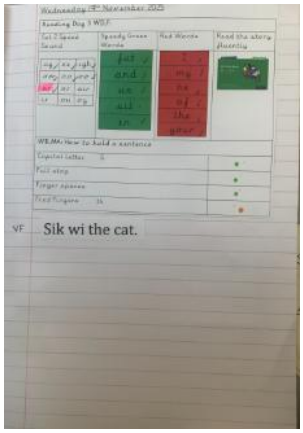
Grip Development Journey

Dominant Hand Preference	Assessment Point 1	Assessment Point 2	Assessment Point 3	Assessment Point 4	Assessment Point 5	Assessment Point 6
	Palmar Supinate Grip	Digital Pronate Grasp	Static Tripod Grip	Triangulation Grip	Inverted Tripod Grip	Tripod/ Triangulation Grip
Left ☐ Right ☐						

Additional physical enrichment opportunities for Rising Stars: Swimming Y4 and Y6, trip for Y6 pupils to Holcombe Brook.

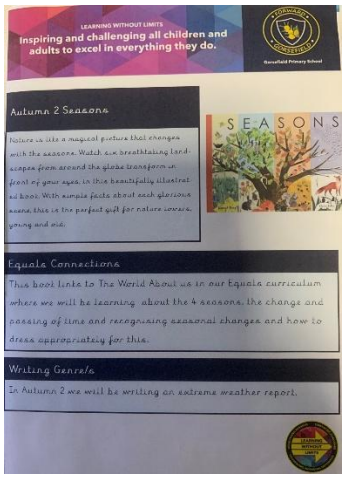
<u>Spotlight on SEND adaptations: Case study child with hypermobility & ASD, under SALT (recording using a 1:1 device) during RWI</u>

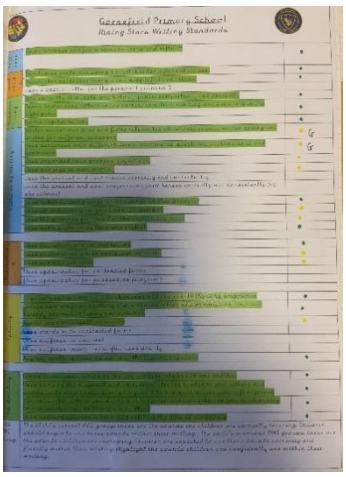




Rising Stars: Formal Curriculum

All children in Rising Stars are working at Pre-key stage standards in writing and to continue to develop their foundational writing skills they follow a 2- week writing cycle to support their writing needs. The Rising Stars Equals text spine supports children's writing curriculum and texts from this are used a stimulus to develop and enhance their writing opportunities. These key texts link to their Equals curriculum for example in cycle 1 autumn 1 in My Independence children have the key text The Shopping Basket by John Burningham and children will write a diary entry about a visit to the shops. Children are presented with an overview of the writing genre and links to the Equals curriculum to support children in making connections throughout their curriculum. Children are assessed within their writing according to their phonetical awareness (Strong Foundations in the first years of school 2024) using our sounds for writing assessment.





Getting Ready to Write: The Development Stages

<u>Pivot Journey Assessment Points</u>

<u>Upper Body</u>

When children first begin to mark make, they are not doing it necessarily to convey meaning, they are doing it because they can. How children use their body to aid their early mark making is by using a sequence of muscle movements. Which muscles they use depends on their stage of development. Most children follow the same sequence of development, so once you are aware of it you are able to assess where your children are and create appropriate provision for them to support and extend learning.

Pivot Journey Assessment Point 1	<u>Shoulder Pivot</u> *As part of assessment, we need to look for children who are pivoting from the shoulder with a palmar supinate grasp.* Using this pivot, children are employing the full range of motion for their arm. They therefore need large spaced to be able to mark make. * See Palmar Supinate Grip	Proprioception and balance Proprioception is the brain using all sorts of information from different parts of the body to make use of the space available. An essential part of this movement is to maintain balance while still and in motion. Large physical movements of the arms and upper body shift the centre of balance and so you must continually change the child's sense of proprioception.	To develop shoulder pivot try: • Washing walls with soap and brushes • Painting with mops • Foam bike tracks • Big digging • Swing ball with tights and socks
Pivot Journey Assessment Point 2	<u>Elbow Pivot</u> *As part of assessment, we need to look for the emergent stage and the proficient stage.* Once the muscles in the back, upper arms and shoulders begin to strengthen, there usually starts to be more movement further down the arm at the next point of pivot: the elbow. * See Palmar Supinate Grip	**<u>Emergent Stage:</u>** where the elbow bends allowing for greater range of movement, but the shoulder is still the main 'power' in moving the arm backwards and forwards. This looks like a sawing motion where the arm tends to move in straight lines across the body or from front to back. **<u>Proficient Stage:</u>** when a child becomes more proficient in their elbow pivot, then they begin to use the muscles in their upper and lower arm to swing their arm in and out from their body in a semi-circular action, thus significantly increasing their range of movement. Often when the elbow pivot is developing, the wrist stays quite still and the grip is still palmar supinate.	To develop elbow pivot, first split children into emergent and proficient. For emergent children, encourage full range motion but bendng their elbows, moving arms up and down, as well as across their body. Use large rollers or brushes up and down on outside surfaces to develop elbow pivot, but also consolidate should pivot and support balance and proprioception. Other development techniques include: • Children pulling their bodies up on ropes/ climbing wall • Ribbon/ scarf twirling • Throwing and catching using elbows to push the hand forward • Making pattens in sand with lollipops • Sticking and pulling plungers from both vertical and horizontal surfaces • Sweeping motion with stiff brush- sweeping races or foam tracks

			• Offer 'clean' spaces for mark making- regularly replace paper supply
Pivot Journey Assessment Point 3	<u>Wrist Pivot</u> *As part of assessment, we need to look for the elbow tucking into the side of the body and should movement at a minimal.* *As the arm muscles and the sense of balance develop further then the picot changes again, this time to allow an even smaller range of movement. This time, the pivot moves to the wrist.* * See Palmar Supinate Grip	By the time a child reaches wrist pivot stage, their development in their lower arms, upper arms and shoulders are all now developed, and their overall movement and balance tend to be far more fluid than it was. Often with a wrist pivot comes a change in a child's grip from palmar supinate to digital pronate (digit, meaning finger and pronate, meaning palm turned down). When a child adopts a digital pronate grip, they bend their wrist nearly 45 degrees, grip their mark making implement with 3 fingers and use their first finger to manipulate the end of their pencil.	To develop wrist pivot try: • Threading • Sewing • Dabbing with sponge or brush • Fishing game • Splatter painting NB: The overall movement of the activities that you plan for a developing wrist pivot will be much smaller in range than you have planned before. You might want to reduce everything in size to encourage the child to really focus on their development.

<u>Fine Motor Journey Assessment Points</u>

<u>Pencil Grip</u>

The end of the 'pivot' journey will be when children get that mark making implement to the very last, smallest set of pivots, right at the end of the fingers. If their can hold their mark making tools there then they will have the fullest, most dexterous range of movement their body can provide.

<u>Fine Motor Strength</u>

The hand is quite a complex piece of machinery and is made up of lots of difference joints and muscle groups that interconnect and work together to provide maximum dexterity. In a child's journey to becoming a mark maker and eventually a write they need to be proficient in all of the following. **When you are thinking about the provision that you have available for developing children's fine motor dexterity it is useful to think about the skill first and then match this to the activity.**

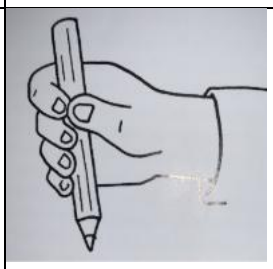
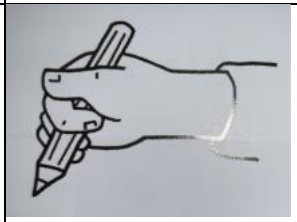
Fine Motor Journey Assessment Point 1	Pincer Grasp/ Grip	This enables a child to pick up small items using the thumb and index finger. The most basic form of this skill is when children use all their fingers to 'rake' items into the palm of their hand. During the next phase of their development, they might pinch items with the thumb against the side of the index finger before moving on to a more accomplished grip, where they can use the end of their thumb and forefinger in a pincer grasp to manipulate small objects effectively.

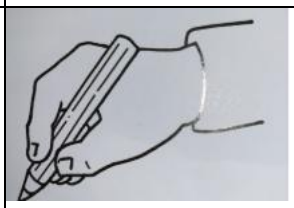
Fine Motor Journey Assessment Point 2	Palm Arches	There are several arches within the palm of a hand that enable the hand to grasp a range of different objects of various sizes and shapes. These arches direct the skilled movement of fingers and control the power of the grasp. Palm arches are directly related to a child's ability to manipulate a mark making implement e.g: pencil/ paintbrush. If the palm arches are not well developed, then they cannot provide enough support to their fingers to allow them in turn to manipulate the mark making tool. This is why children will grasp their mark making implement in their palm at the earliest stages of their development.
Fine Motor Journey Assessment Point 3	In-hand Manipulation	This skill refers to the ability to move and position objects within one hand without the assistance of the other hand. Children can often find this hard. Children need lots of practice with items such as elastic bands and pencils, moving them between their fingers. Children can practice with round objects such as marbles or conkers which they have to rotate in the palm of one hand. Usually with fine motor dexterity exercises, children start with large objects because they are the easiest to manipulate. Within in-hand manipulation it is the opposite: the larger the object, the more challenge.
Fine Motor Journey Assessment Point 4	Thumb Opposition	This refers to the ability to turn and rotate the thumb so that it can touch each fingertip of the same hand. Start with the palm spread and then get the children to use their thumb to touch each of the fingertips in turn. After each individual touch always return to a spread palm. When children become proficient at doing this with each hand individually then get them to do it with both hands at the same time. To extend the challenge further ask the children to do both hands together but start with the index finger on one hand and the little finger on another. This is not only good for developing dexterity, but also bilateral brain work.
Fine Motor Journey Assessment Point 5	Finger Isolation	To do this, children need to be able to move each finger one at a time. At the early stages of dexterity development children will move all of their fingers together in a grasping motion. As children develop, they learn to move their fingers individually. This ability is very important in the development of fine motor skills and it is the mechanism that will allow children to hold and manipulate a pencil or a paintbrush as well as tie laces, push buttons and a host of other everyday essential skills.
Fine Motor Journey Assessment Point 6	Knuckle, PIP and DIP Joints	Knuckle, PIP and DIP Joints refer to the bones in a child's hand, thumb and fingers. The first on is the knuckle (metacarpophalangeal joint). This is usually very flexible and used for grabbing/ raking and also in pencil grips like palmar supinate. The next joint is the proximal

		interphalangeal joint (pip joint) and this is used for all major grips and finger manipulations. The final finger joint is the distal interphalangeal joint (DIP joint) and this is the one that children need to be able to manipulate well to support a tripod grip. To develop this joint children need to work with things that are small and fiddly and malleable materials that give high levels of resistance.
Fine Motor Journey Assessment Point 7	Bilateral Coordination	This means using both sides to do the same thing in a controlled way. Like pushing open a door or jumping into a puddle. Children also need to be proficient at using alternating movements when both sides of the body are doing the same thing but not at the same time. Walking is a good examples of where children are using their arms and legs to make similar movements to each other but in sequence. The most complex level of bilateral coordination is where the body has to do two completely different movements on each side but at the same time, such as cutting with scissors while holding and controlling the paper with the other hand.
Fine Motor Journey Assessment Point 8	Crossing the Midline	This skill primarily involves more upper body gross motor movement, rather than the smaller fine motor skills. Crossing the Midline is the ability for children to cross their arms and legs over to the other side of their body. Children who are in the early stages of developing this skill would not be able to do things like draw a horizontal line across a page in front of them without changing hands halfway through. It is an important skill because it is used in everything from helping to read/ tracking print left to right to putting socks on.
Fine Motor Journey Assessment Point 9	Hand-Eye Coordination	The correct term for this is visual motor integration and it is one of the fundamental skills which holds the key to so many of the things that children need to be able to do, not only to become successful mark makers but to have success in virtually every aspect of their life. This is the ability to control hand movement guided by vision and we use the skill to enable us to draw, paint, thread, colour, cut, pour, eat, build and write (and more!). It is essential that children have lots of practice in development this skill on a daily basis.

Grip Development Journey Assessment Points

Assessing Pencil Grip Development			
Grip Development Journey Assessment Point 1	Palmar Supinate Grip	All children start their mark making journey with a ***palmar supinate grip*** or palm grip. This is the grip that will probably be prevalent through the entire shoulder, elbow and possibly write pivot development. The mark making implement id held in the palm of the hand and the fingers are clamped around it to keep it in place. There is not yet	

		development in the palm arches or the dexterity in the fingers to support the mark making tool being held in any other way. All of the manipulation and movement of the child's mark making tool is coming from a pivot further up the arm. Only when the muscles in the arm have been strengthened (and the pivots have moved from shoulder to wrist) alongside mastering the palm arches and the in-hand manipulation skills, will there be enough dexterity and strength to support a grip challenge.	
Grip Development Journey Assessment Point 2	Digital Pronate Grasp	The first grip change is like to be a ***digital pronate grasp***, although not all children go through this stage of development. It is called a digital pronate because the children primarily use one finger/ digit to pronate/ rotate/ manipulate their mark making implement. To adopt a digital pronate grasp you have to be able to pivot from the wrist as you need to be able to achieve that 90 degree angle to get to the paper.	
Grip Development Journey Assessment Point 3	Static Tripod Grip	What often comes next is a grip that tends to be more prevalent in boys than girls. This is also a tricky grip because its development often coincides whin the child's ability to being to link sounds to letters and record them as recognisable symbols or being to recognise and write their name. This grip is called the ***expanded*** or ***static tripod grip.*** The mark making tool has been pushed right to the end of the fingers. The thumb is used to 'clamp' the mark making tool in place and it is mainly the little finger that is creating the range of movement. ***Although this is a perfectly normal stage of mark making development for some children, it is a particularly crucial once and needs to be handled with care. If a child begins to regularly record recognisable letters with this, or any other, unusual grip their brain very soon gets into the habit of thinking that this way of holding their pencil and forming letters is 'comfortable' and becomes the norm. The more they do it, the more they are embedding this grip and range of movement.***	
Grip Development Journey Assessment Point 4	Triangulation Grip	Once children have mastered the art of holding their pencil and orientating their letter shapes with the wrong grip it can become almost impossible to get them to change. When you see an expanded tripod grip developing then that is the time to intervene and help children to transition to the ***triangulation grip.***	
Grip Development Journey Assessment Point 5	Inverted Tripod Grip	Another version of this grip is an ***inverted tripod grip*** where the child's little finger and fourth finger are behind the pencil near to the point and their index and second finger curled around the front of it mid-way up. Meanwhile their thumb is at the very top of the pencil clamping it in place against the fingers.	

		Children who adopt an expanded or inverted tripod grip often do this because they sill lack dexterity in their final finger joints. These children need lots of opportunity to practice manipulating these joints, either by using them to pick up or manoeuvre tiny objects, or to work with a small amount of malleable material that will give a great deal of resistance like a putty.	
Grip Development Journey Assessment Point 6	Tripod/ Triangulation Grip	A ***tripod/ triangulation grip*** is where the mark making implement is held between the thumb and forefinger and supported from behind with the middle finger. The movement of the mark making implement is controlled by the pivoting joints for the thumb and fingers. This allows for maximum flexibility and maximum range of movement.	

Children need to use ***tripod/ triangulation grip*** is where the mark making implement is held between the thumb and forefinger and supported from behind with the middle finger.