

Writing

Writing at Red Gates

Writing at Red Gates may not appear to be the traditional activity that others expect. There is a great degree of exploration and experimentation in our Writing sessions. Sessions often have a strong emphasis on sensory mark making and the development of movements which enable writing. Fine motor skills are an essential part of this, not just mark making but activities which help to strengthen muscles and develop pincher grip.

EYFS

Before a pupil can develop their fine motor skills they need to be confident with larger scale movements. Chalk painting on the ground, water painting the fences and walls with large brushes and washing the windows are all fun ways to develop these movements and build muscle strength. Pupils will also explore mark making in a variety of sensory media both with tools and bare hands; shaving foam, paint and mashed potato powder are all great bases and can be used with fingers, scrapers, wooden pencils and even toy cars. Play dough can be squeezed and rolled to strengthen muscles in the hand. These activities also encourage turn taking and sharing. Use of ICT via programs such as Tiggly [I Pad] or paint [IWB] can encourage pupils who struggle more with messy play activities. Emergent writing can be assessed during these activities.

LISS

Carousel learning allows pupils to explore a range of different approaches to writing and can include a wider range of differentiation; for example, mark making using sensory media, tracing, name writing or use of ICT programs. Pupils are encouraged to use a variety of writing tools in mark making activities. Handwriting without Tears provides a scaffold for pupils to practise letter formation, letter recognition and initial sound recognition. Writing for a purpose is vital to engage pupils' interest. This could be writing a shopping list for a community visit to the shop, writing a recipe or recording activities in journals. There are support programs to support pupils with development of fine motor skills and pen grip, these programs are supported by OT input for some pupils.

Sensory

Lots of varied sensory activities are offered to encourage pupils to explore and to create marks. Larger scale movements are encouraged to strengthen muscles and the paint program on IWB is helpful for this. The sensation of movement creating effects and influencing other materials provides a focus for activities. Mark making in sensory media can be linked to sensory stories and rhymes creating a more holistic experience. Massage of hands and fingers can help some pupils increase their awareness of them. Some pupils have access to fine motor skills sessions led by OT. Activities are created to strengthen pincher grip and move pupils from palmer grasp to primitive tripod grip. Use of different writing tools with a variety of handles, widths and grips can support this. Handwriting without Tears is used with some pupils, focussing on the vertical and horizontal lines supports the linear scribbling stage of emergent writing and is necessary to develop before moving on to circular scribbling and letter formation.

ASD

Mark making forms part of early writing both using sensory media and messy play or using 'clean' methods such as filled pouches or apps/programs on the iPad/IWB. Handwriting without Tears can be beneficial to develop recognition of letter shapes and formation. Activities with playdough [e.g. Dough Disco] can develop muscles in the hand and promote improved pincer grip. As pupils progress more emphasis is placed on functional writing to strengthen engagement. Pupils write recipes for cooking sessions, invitations to parents for events such as the Carol Concert or Sports Day. Writing for a purpose can be supported by use of communication boards to structure sentences visually before writing. Using text from topic stories can help to build sentences, sending messages to the characters for example or answering questions. Journals are used to recall pupils activities and can show evidence of independent writing, key words, initial letters as well as visuals and supported writing.