



The writing framework July 2025

The DfE's new writing framework asks school leaders and subject leaders to engage in a comprehensive audit of their current writing provision. The aim is to move schools from a general understanding to a detailed, evidence-based plan for improvement.

Based on the framework's guidance, here are the key areas for an audit and a sensible, useful way to approach it.

The Key Audit Areas

The framework outlines several key areas that schools need to audit. These can be grouped into four main sections:

1. Curriculum and Pedagogy

This is the core of the audit, focusing on what is taught and how.

- **Curriculum Sequencing:** Does the writing curriculum have a clear and logical progression from Reception to Year 6? Is there a clear link between early language development and later writing skills?
- **Teaching of Foundational Skills:** Is there a consistent, whole-school approach to teaching handwriting and spelling? Is phonics taught systematically and used as the primary method for spelling in the early years?
- **Sentence and Composition:** How are grammar and vocabulary taught? Is it in isolation, or as tools to improve writing? Are pupils taught how to construct sentences orally before writing them down?
- **Writing Process:** Does the school have a clear, shared process for writing (Planning, Drafting, Revising, Editing)? Is this modelled effectively by teachers?

2. Pupil Support and Inclusion

This section focuses on identifying and supporting pupils who need additional help.

- **Early Identification:** Are there clear procedures for identifying pupils who are falling behind in writing as early as possible, including in Reception?
- **Adaptive Teaching:** How are teachers adapting their practice to support pupils with SEND or other learning needs? Is there a clear approach to providing manageable steps and plenty of practice?
- **High Expectations:** Does the school demonstrate high expectations and ambition for all pupils, regardless of their needs?

3. School Culture and Leadership

This area looks at the overall environment for writing within the school.

- **Positive Writing Culture:** Is writing valued and celebrated across the school, not just in English lessons? Are pupils motivated to write?

- **Teacher Expertise:** Do all teachers and TA's feel confident and well-trained in teaching writing? Is there a clear plan for ongoing professional development in this area?
- **Leadership and Curriculum:** Do leaders ensure a positive writing culture, a well-sequenced curriculum, and consistency in teaching across the school?

4. Assessment and Moderation

This area is about how the school judges and tracks writing progress.

- **Assessment Model:** Is the school's assessment approach in line with the new "best fit" model, which values overall quality and composition over a strict checklist of criteria?
- **Moderation:** Are there clear, regular, and effective moderation cycles to ensure consistency in teacher judgments across year groups and key stages?

A Useful Way to Conduct the Audit

A sensible approach to this audit is to make it a collaborative and practical exercise.

Begin by communicating the purpose of the audit to all staff. You're not looking for what's wrong; the focus should be on *what's working* and *what's next*.

1. **Use a Simple Audit Tool:** Create or use a simple audit document for each of the four main areas listed above. You can structure this with two columns:
 - **"What we think we do well" (Strengths):** Teachers can add evidence or examples of current good practice.
 - **"What we need to work on" (Next Steps):** Teachers can identify gaps or areas for development.
2. **Gather Evidence from Multiple Sources:** An audit should not be based on one person's opinion. A truly useful audit will gather evidence from:
 - **Pupil Voice:** Talk to pupils about their feelings towards writing. Do they enjoy it? Do they feel like they are good at it?
 - **Book Scrutiny:** Look at a range of pupil books across year groups to see the progression of skills and the opportunities for writing across the curriculum.
 - **Learning Walks / Observations:** Observe lessons to see if the teaching aligns with the framework's recommendations, particularly around oral rehearsal and guided practice.
 - **Teacher Surveys:** A simple survey can gather staff confidence levels and ideas for professional development.
3. **Make it Action-Oriented:** The audit is only useful if it leads to action. Once the evidence is gathered, lead a collaborative staff meeting to:
 - **Identify Priorities:** What are the 1-2 key areas the school needs to focus on first? The framework itself suggests prioritising talk, transcription, and sentence building initially.
 - **Create an Action Plan:** Assign specific actions, responsibilities, and timelines.
 - **Integrate into the School Improvement Plan:** Ensure the writing action plan is part of the broader school improvement strategy.

By making the audit a shared, reflective, and actionable process, a school can ensure it's not just a box-ticking exercise but a genuine driver for improving writing outcomes for every child.