



Early Identification Linked to the Writing Framework Goals

Early identification of barriers to progress in oracy and writing relies on noticing key indicators and acting decisively to unlock potential. Each area below is explicitly linked to the DfE Writing Framework goals: transcription, composition, and oral rehearsal.

1. Fine Motor Development – Building Foundations for Transcription

Why It Matters: Physical development underpins handwriting. Without strong fine motor skills, children cannot form letters fluently, which is a key expectation in Reception.

Indicators:

- Difficulty holding a pencil with a tripod grip by mid-Reception, affecting letter formation.
- Poor control when using scissors or tools, signalling weak hand-eye coordination needed for writing.
- Limited strength for tasks like threading or using tweezers, impacting stamina for handwriting.

Teacher Actions:

- Build core strength through gross motor activities (climbing, crawling, large-scale painting) to support posture.
- Offer fine motor tasks (playdough, pegboards, lacing cards) to develop grip strength.
- Model correct pencil grip and posture during writing sessions.
- Use vertical surfaces for mark-making to strengthen shoulder stability.
- If delays persist, liaise with SENCO for targeted intervention.

2. Language and Phonological Awareness – Foundations for Composition

Why It Matters: Oral language and phonological awareness are prerequisites for phonics and sentence construction, both central to the writing framework.

**Indicators:**

- Restricted vocabulary or limited sentence structure.
- Difficulty hearing initial sounds, clapping syllables, or recognising rhymes.

Teacher Actions:

- Embed rich oral language experiences: storytelling, role-play, dialogic reading to model ambitious vocabulary.
- Teach vocabulary explicitly using real objects, visuals, and repetition.
- Incorporate daily phonological games (rhyming, syllable clapping, sound hunts) to strengthen phonics foundations.
- Track progress using Development Matters checkpoints for Communication & Language.

3. Engagement in Mark-Making and Storytelling – Motivating Early Writers

Why It Matters: Positive engagement with mark-making and storytelling builds confidence and supports early composition skills.

Indicators:

- Avoids writing areas or only scribbles without intent.
- Shows little interest in drawing or creating narratives.

Teacher Actions:

- Provide varied mark-making opportunities (sand trays, chalk outdoors, paintbrushes) to spark interest.
- Link writing to play themes (menus in role-play cafés) to make writing meaningful.
- Model storytelling and scribe children's ideas to show value in their words.
- Praise effort and creativity rather than neatness to build confidence.



4. Sequencing and Oral Composition – Preparing for Written Composition

Why It Matters: Oral rehearsal is a cornerstone of the writing framework. Sequencing ideas orally helps children plan and structure sentences before writing.

Indicators:

- Cannot retell a simple story in order.
- Struggles to explain events using time connectives.

Teacher Actions:

- Use visual supports: story maps, sequencing cards, Mighty Writer mat to scaffold oral composition.
- Encourage oral rehearsal before writing: “Tell me your sentence first.”
- Scaffold with sentence starters and time connectives (“First... then... finally...”).
- Pair with peers for collaborative storytelling to build confidence.