



Whole-School Writing Culture: Implementation Support Pack

Overview

This resource pack provides practical approaches and guidance to support the implementation of a whole-school writing culture. It aligns with the webinar 'Creating a Culture of Writing' and is designed to strengthen consistency, modelling, oracy, sentence fluency and independent writing across the school.

Core Whole-School Writing Approaches

These approaches form the backbone of a consistent, high-quality writing culture. They are deliberately simple, repeatable and sustainable — the kind of habits that reduce cognitive load, strengthen oral composition and ensure every child, in every classroom, experiences writing in the same predictable way.

1. Sentence of the Day (Reception – Year 6)

A daily whole-school routine designed to build sentence fluency, vocabulary precision, and accuracy over time.

What it looks like

- A single image or Mighty Writer tile is shown to the class.
- Pupils whisper their first version of a sentence
- The teacher models a more precise, clearer or more powerful version, thinking aloud as they do it.
- Partners rehearse improved sentences using structures such as *Keep... Change... Add...*
- One high-quality sentence is captured and celebrated.

Why it works

- Builds secure sentence foundations from EYFS through to Year 6 — the “line of sight” described in the writing framework.
- Reduces cognitive load by focusing on one strong sentence, not extended tasks.
- Reinforces vocabulary, grammar and clarity through repeated micro-practice.
- Perfectly aligns with the DfE emphasis on oral composition, sentence control, and purposeful vocabulary.

Whole-school benefit

When every class engages with a Sentence of the Day routine, progression becomes seamless: EYFS rehearse ideas orally; KS1 shape simple yet meaningful sentences; KS2 refine, extend and improve for precision.



2. Plan → Say → Write

A consistent process that helps children understand how writing works — not just what to write.

Plan

- Pupils use images, icons or prompt vocabulary to generate ideas.
- In EYFS/KS1, this might involve selecting Mighty Writer tiles or sequencing icons.
- In KS2, planning may include a mini outline, three-step sequence or paragraph frame.

Say

- Pupils orally rehearse their sentence or explanation using key vocabulary.
- Teachers model improvements — stronger verbs, clearer nouns, more effective ordering.
- Oracy becomes the bridge between thinking and writing.

Write

- Only once the sentence makes sense orally do pupils write it down.
- This removes the “blank page freeze” and significantly improves accuracy and independence.

Why it works

- Mirrors the writing framework’s focus on communication → composition → transcription.
- Builds automaticity in sentence construction.
- Supports SEND and EAL learners by making the process visible, structured and predictable.

3. Partner Rehearsal

Short, structured talk before writing — a foundational habit of teaching writing effectively.

How it works

- Partner A rehearses their sentence.
- Partner B listens for sense, structure, and precision.
- Partner B responds using:
Keep... Change... Add...
- Pupils switch roles.

Why it works

- Encourages children to *think aloud*, refine and improve before writing.
- Reinforces metacognitive awareness: *Does it make sense? Is it clear?*
- Makes talk purposeful — exactly what Ofsted and the Writing Framework emphasise.



Whole-school impact

When every class uses partner rehearsal:

- speaking skills improve
- writing becomes more coherent
- sentence fluency grows
- independence increases

This is one of the simplest and most powerful approaches for raising writing outcomes.

4. Modelling Through Think-Aloud

Teachers explicitly verbalise the decisions writers make.

What teachers model aloud

- **Vocabulary choices:** *"I'm changing 'went' to 'crept' because it sounds more interesting."*
- **Clarity decisions:** *"This fronted adverbial makes the sentence less clear — I'll remove it."*
- **Structure and cohesion:** *"I need a conjunction that explains why... so I'll use because."*
- **Sense checking:** *"Let me reread to check it makes sense."*

Why it works

- Makes invisible cognitive processes visible.
- Helps children internalise expert writing behaviours.
- Supports the progression from oral to written composition.
- Particularly powerful in KS2 where sentence control and clarity become critical.

5. Vocabulary Walls That Move

Vocabulary becomes a *living*, portable resource instead of a static wall display.

What they include

- Topic-specific nouns and verbs
- Vocabulary for clarity and precision
- Mighty Writer symbol banks and icons
- Sentence starters and conjunctions



How they are used

- Brought to the carpet or group tables during oracy sessions.
- Used in partner rehearsal to support oral composition.
- Integrated into Plan → Say → Write routines.
- Used to pre-teach vocabulary in EYFS and KS1, and refine precision in KS2.

Why it works

- Reduces cognitive load — pupils don't need to "remember everything" at once.
- Embeds vocabulary in oral rehearsal before writing begins.
- Directly supports inclusion for SEND and EAL pupils.
- Demonstrates the Writing Framework's emphasis on vocabulary breadth, precision and deliberate word choice.

Writing Progression: EYFS → KS2

• EYFS: Oral composition, vocabulary-rich play, one idea → one sentence

Children learn to express ideas aloud before writing. Adults model simple sentence structures, strong nouns and verbs, and "changing your mind aloud." Play and Continuous Provision become opportunities for rehearsing language, building confidence and connecting talk to meaning. The goal is secure oral sentences and early transcription anchored in purpose.

• Year 1: Simple sentence fluency, strong verbs and nouns, supported sequencing

Children move from single ideas to clear, punctuated sentences. Teaching focuses on strong verbs, precise nouns, saying a sentence before writing, and building two- to three-step sequences with spoken rehearsal. Mighty Writer or similar visuals support structure, helping children internalise what a complete sentence sounds like.

• Year 2: Sentence sequences, early cohesion, improved accuracy

Pupils develop connected sentences using simple cohesive devices (*and, then, because*). Accuracy improves through daily oral rehearsal, dictation for sense and teacher modelling. Children rehearse short sequences aloud and learn how to make writing flow logically. Vocabulary broadens through topic learning and structured talk.



- **Years 3–4: Paragraph building, cohesion, vocabulary precision**

Children move from sentence-level fluency to organising ideas across paragraphs. They rehearse topic sentences, supporting details and concluding lines orally before writing. Teaching emphasises clearer cohesion (*First...*, *As a result...*, *Meanwhile...*) and choosing more precise verbs and nouns. Think-aloud modelling becomes crucial for demonstrating decision-making.

- **Years 5–6: Independent sentence crafting, clarity, control of clauses and purpose-driven writing**

Upper KS2 pupils refine control over clause structures, punctuation under pressure and vocabulary that matches purpose, tone and subject. They rehearse paragraphs orally, test clarity, and edit for precision. By this stage, routines such as Partner Rehearsal and Sentence of the Day support independence, enabling pupils to craft and improve writing with minimal scaffolding.

Inclusion Strategies (SEND & EAL)

- **Sentence Frames with One Variable (e.g. *At* ____, *the* ____ .)**

Provide partially structured sentences where pupils only change one or two elements. This reduces cognitive load while still promoting meaningful language choices. Frames can support recounts, explanations or descriptions, and help pupils internalise sentence patterns before moving to independent construction.

- **Oral Rehearsal Before Writing for All Tasks**

Every writing task begins with speaking: pupils rehearse their sentence aloud to ensure clarity, accuracy and confidence.

For SEND and EAL learners, this step is essential — it builds vocabulary security, strengthens sentence fluency and removes the pressure of generating language and writing at the same time. This aligns directly with the Writing Framework's emphasis on oral composition.

- **Use of Images + Gestures + Keywords for New Concepts**

Combine visual prompts (images, icons), teacher gestures (miming key actions), and a small set of keywords.

This multimodal approach supports comprehension and makes abstract concepts concrete. It is especially effective in EYFS and lower KS1, as well as for pupils with language processing needs or limited English. Visual routines also strengthen the link between oracy and writing.



• Aim for One Excellent Sentence First, Then Build

Rather than overwhelming pupils with extended writing, the focus is on crafting one high-quality sentence.

Once secure, pupils may add a second or expand their idea, depending on readiness. This keeps expectations high while ensuring success for pupils with working memory, processing or attention difficulties. It also fits the whole-school emphasis on sentence-level mastery.

• Teacher/Peer Scribing Options Where Appropriate

When writing becomes a barrier to demonstrating understanding, a teacher or peer can scribe the pupil's orally composed sentence.

This preserves the focus on language, structure and clarity while reducing transcription load. It allows SEND and EAL pupils to participate fully in the writing process and produce high-quality oral sentences that can later support independent writing.

Three-Step Implementation Roadmap

Step 1 — Build the Foundations

Focus on establishing the core routines that make writing predictable, manageable and language-rich for all pupils.

What staff focus on

- Daily oral rehearsal to strengthen sentence fluency and confidence.
- Consistent use of Sentence of the Day to model, rehearse and improve sentences.
- Embedding the Plan → Say → Write approach so children experience the same process in every class.
- Introducing shared vocabulary routines, including portable vocabulary banks and key topic words rehearsed aloud.
- Using Mighty Writer mats and icons to make ideas and structures visible and concrete for all learners.

Why this term matters

It sets the “joined-up thinking”— shared language, shared expectations and predictable routines that reduce cognitive load and help pupils understand how writing works.



Step 2 — Strengthen Consistency Across the Curriculum

Extend writing routines beyond English so pupils see writing as a tool for thinking in every subject.

What staff focus on

- Applying Sentence-of-the-Day-style modelling in science, history, geography, RE and DT.
- Using minimats or icons to support non-fiction planning and quick oral explanations.
- Photographing oral rehearsal sequences, Mighty Writer mats and planning frames to make the learning process visible without adding workload.
- Encouraging structured partner talk using routines like Keep... Change... Add... before written explanations.
- Strengthening vocabulary through subject-specific word banks rehearsed aloud.

Why this term matters

It builds the cross-curricular coherence highlighted by Ofsted and the Writing Framework — pupils learn that sentence clarity, accurate vocabulary and structured thought matter everywhere, not just in English.

Step 3 — Deepen Independence and Raise Expectations

Once routines are secure, the focus shifts to independence, precision and quality.

What staff focus on

- Gradually reducing scaffolds (fewer frames, fewer prompts) while keeping core routines in place.
- Strengthening cohesion within paragraphs through oral rehearsal of sequences and topic sentences.
- Improving accuracy under pressure through short dictations, clarity checks and revising sentences aloud.
- Celebrating visible progress with Spot the Strong Sentence, highlighting deliberate choices in vocabulary, structure or clarity.
- Supporting pupils to edit for precision, testing whether sentences are as clear and purposeful as possible.

Why this term matters

This is where pupils demonstrate independence— clarity, control of clauses, better vocabulary choices and genuine ownership of the writing process.