Educational Strategy Team

Writing

Trust Expectations and Principles (TEP)

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Trust Expectations and Principles (TEP)

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Why do we have this Trust Expectations and Principles document (TEP)?

A TEP provides a coherent framework of educational policies, toolkits and resources that constitutes a cognitive education model designed to maximise our success in transforming life chances for all.

Every school's local policy must be underpinned by reference to these Trust Expectations and Principles, which outline implementation and delivery. These will include

1. The threshold of expectation
2. Enhanced monitoring

Who does this TEP apply to?

This TEP applies to all individuals and entities who engage with or are impacted by the Thinking Schools Academy Trust operations.

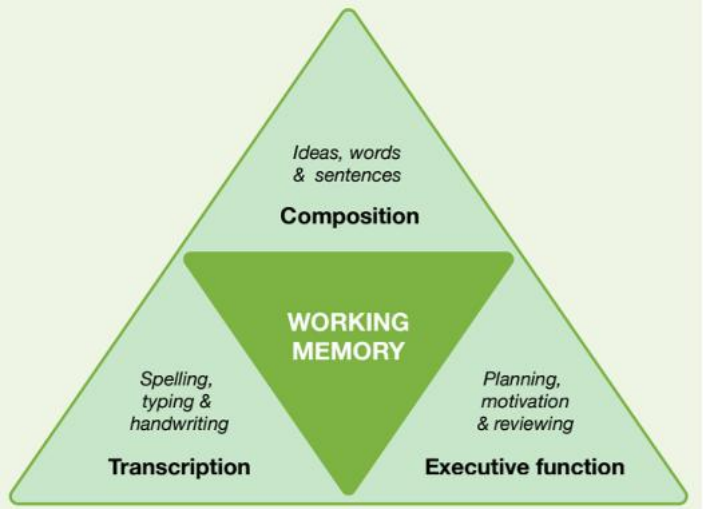
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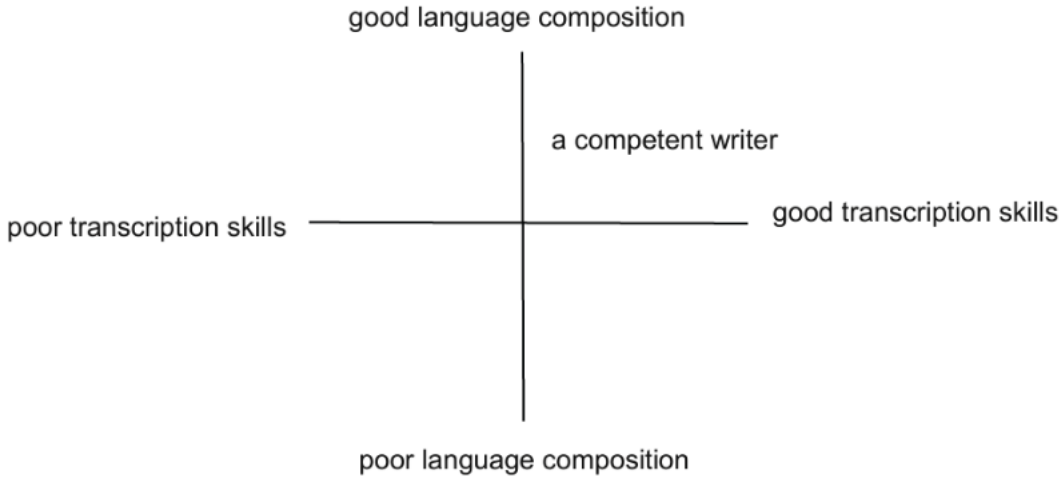
Trust Core TEP

Writing is a process that, like reading, is composed of several elements and carries a significant cognitive load. Pupils need to develop skills in all areas to be successful writers.



Endowment Foundation (EEF) discusses the implications of the Simple View of Writing in their Improving Literacy guidance reports[18].

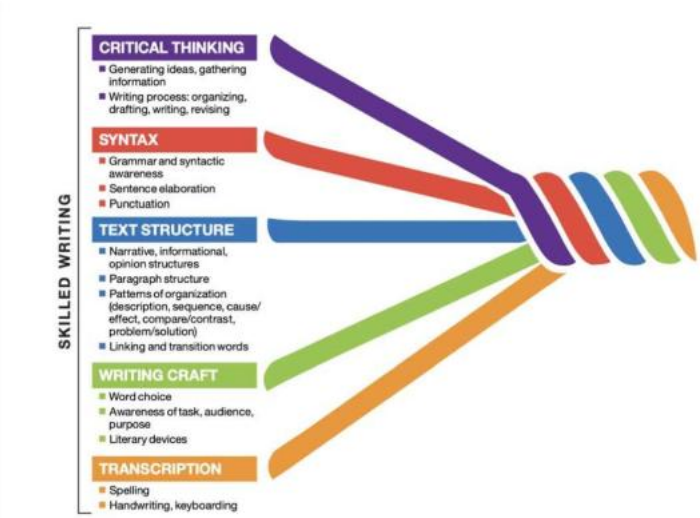
Figure 1: An illustration of the simple view of writing

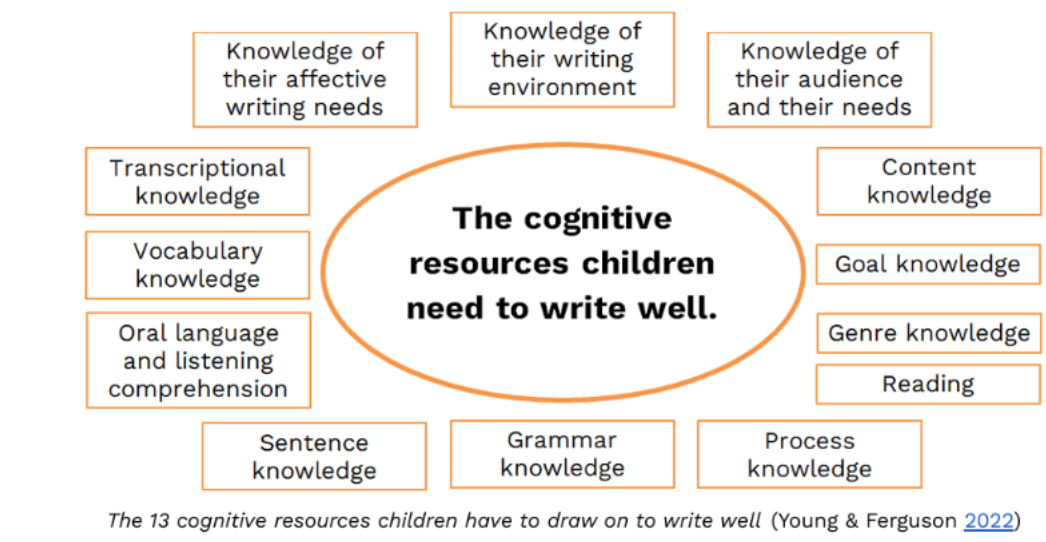


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The 13 cognitive resources children have to draw on to write well (Young & Ferguson 2022)

Leaders and teachers understand that being able to write is a skill that develops confidence and self-expression. It is an important tool for expressing understanding across the curriculum and in all subjects. It is also currently necessary for achieving positive outcomes in assessments and external examinations in KS2 and above.

Teachers understand that automaticity in foundational skills such as transcription and spelling lessens cognitive load, so students can focus on content. This informs the strategy for and approach to the development of early writing skills.

Central to our Writing TEP are six essential elements that underpin consistent and effective approaches to literacy in our Trust. These six elements are the fundamental facets of what we do and form the basis of a framework for developing teachers' effective practice and our intent and implementation. Each of the six elements are crucial in ensuring all our young people become effective communicators.

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1) **Leadership**
   a) **Roles and responsibilities**
      - There is a nominated leader for writing. This may be the literacy lead, teaching and learning or writing lead.
      - This lead must have the authority to impact whole school strategy and implementation.
      - It is clear who leads the approach to improving writing across the school and who has overall responsibility for leading and monitoring interventions.
      - Those leaders with a role to play in developing the school's approach to writing must have timetabled opportunities to meet regularly.

   b) **A whole school approach**
      - There is a clear strategy and approach to writing across the school, which everyone knows and understands.
      - All staff have received training in this approach and understand how pupils learn to write – the process – as well as potential barriers they might face in developing this skill.
      - Leaders understand the writing profile of the pupils and this understanding has informed curriculum planning and development.
      - Leaders recognise the strong link between oracy and writing, and promote this.
      - Colleagues delivering interventions have received appropriate training to do this.

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2) **Assessment**

a) **Assessment of writing at Primary**

- In the first few weeks of starting school, children are assessed for their readiness to write, including pencil grip and control.
- There are secure assessment practices and procedures in place to assess pupils' foundational skills in writing at each key stage to identify pupils falling behind expectations. This includes assessment of the foundational knowledge necessary for transcription: handwriting and spelling.
- Effective monitoring procedures are in place to identify gaps as children move through Primary school.
- Secure writing moderation processes are in place at KS2.

b) **Assessment of writing at Secondary**

- In every Secondary school there is a baseline assessment of writing, which is used to inform interventions and curriculum design, as well as to make sure high expectations of pupils' writing is maintained from Primary.
- There are secure assessment practices and procedures in place to assess pupils' foundational skills in writing. This includes assessment of the foundational knowledge necessary for transcription: handwriting and spelling.
- At Secondary, assessment considers whether there is a difference between pupils' handwriting speed and accuracy and when typing.

c) **Purposeful use of data**

- Writing data is reviewed alongside reading data, to better understand the profile of the pupils.
- Data/information gathered is used to inform access to writing interventions.
- A clear referral process supports initial baseline and subsequent diagnostic assessments.

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3) **Early Writing Implementation**

a) **Curriculum principles**

- The Reception Year curriculum for teaching systematic synthetic phonics, spelling and handwriting is logically sequenced and cumulative.
- The mathematics curriculum is designed to develop children's confidence about and use of mathematical vocabulary.
- Daily routines and interactions ensure that children develop their language and vocabulary across all areas of learning and development and can communicate and manage their thoughts and feelings.
- Staff engage children in high-quality interactions to develop their knowledge and vocabulary.
- Staff help children articulate what they know and understand by scaffolding, modelling, extending and developing their ideas.

b) **Development of fine and gross motor skills and mechanisms for writing.**

- Leaders and teachers plan for, assess and explicitly develop pupils' fine motor skills.
- Pencil grip is taught explicitly and carefully.
- Pupils are taught how to sit when writing and this is reinforced.

c) **Letter formation**

- Schools follow a consistent approach to letter formation.

d) **Writing and phonics integration**

- The schools' systematic synthetic phonics programme links with modelling of handwriting and spelling.
- Spelling is consistently taught and modelled.
- Teachers recognise and understand that phonics is the foundational knowledge of writing, as well as reading.

e) **Principles of delivery**

- Teachers focus on 'keep up' as opposed to 'catch up' in teaching writing.

4) **Interventions or support for struggling writers**

a) **Supporting the development of fine motor skills**

- Teachers understand that poorly developed fine motor skills cannot be a reason for a pupil to develop gaps in writing.
- Teachers understand that poorly developed fine motor skills are a barrier to writing as this can affect pupils' cognitive load and impact their ability to process effectively.
- Pupils with poorly developed fine motor skills are provided with appropriate scaffolds and adaptations to ensure they can keep up with their peers.
- Pupils with poorly developed fine motor skills are provided with opportunities to develop these, so that they are able to develop their handwriting skills.
- As with all interventions, these are monitored for fidelity and impact.
- If interventions are not successful, teachers and leaders will explore alternative interventions initially, but may ultimately need to identify alternative transcription methods to ensure that pupils are able to express themselves and achieve success.

b) **Transcription and securing foundations**

- There is a clear diagnostic assessment and referral process to identify all pupils who need additional support and are working at below an age-related level with handwriting and spellings, in KS2, KS2, KS3 and KS4.
- Where it has been identified that pupils do not have the foundational knowledge required for writing, appropriate actions are taken to secure this.
- There is a systematic intervention in place to support identified students with improving their handwriting. There is clear entry and exit criteria in place and the impact of the intervention is monitored and tracked.
- There is a systematic intervention in place to support identified students with improving their spelling. There is clear entry and exit criteria in place and the impact of the intervention is monitored and tracked.

c) **SPAG**

- There is an appropriate identification and intervention process in place to support pupils with developing their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Specific interventions may need to be explored for children with dyslexia.

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5) **Disciplinary writing and a writing curriculum (Writing across the curriculum/across the disciplines)**

a) **Writing across the curriculum**

- High-quality writing instruction is embedded in every subject and supported by all teachers across every phase, stage, department and lesson.
- Explicit professional development is delivered to provide teachers with the understanding and strategies they need to support pupils appropriately at all levels.
- The curriculum is designed so that pupils have regular opportunities to engage with and hear high quality texts.
- The curriculum is designed to extend pupils' language and vocabulary, both spoken and written.
- There are regular, planned and meaningful opportunities to write in every subject, designed to motivate pupils to write.
- Teachers have identified what a disciplinary approach to writing looks like in each subject. They explicitly teach pupils the specific forms, conventions, technical language and style relevant to writing in each subject.
- Key vocabulary is identified in each subject. Teachers focus on the vocabulary pupils need, including subject-specific vocabulary, to help pupils understand new concepts.
- Teaching ensures that pupils consistently develop their language and vocabulary, both spoken and written, across all subjects.
- Pupils are taught what it means to write for difference audiences and purposes.
- Leaders have agreed strategies that teachers will use in the classroom to support pupils' writing development across subjects. These may include, but are not limited to, the following techniques:

– Deliberate teaching of vocabulary
– Repetition of key words
– Call and response
– Learning to talk and write like a subject specialist
– Scaffolds, writing frames and faded scaffolding
– Providing sentence starters
– Providing paragraph structures
– Providing high quality models or WAGOLLs
– Thinking maps to help pupils organise their ideas
– Teaching self-monitoring and editing as explicit, guided processes

b) **A writing curriculum**

- Schemes of work and curriculum planning is in line with the expectations of the national curriculum.
- Pupils are explicitly taught how to use punctuation and write in sentences.
- Pupils are taught explicitly how to write legibly and fluently.
- Pupils are explicitly taught correct use of grammar through the English curriculum, as part of an overall approach to developing writing fluency.
- Leaders have designed or adopted a writing curriculum which plans for progression and sequencing of skills, including of transcription and composition.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to practise before moving on to the next stage. They have enough teaching and practice to become fluent in handwriting and spelling.

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- In Primary, pupils are explicitly taught the writing process of planning, drafting, editing and publishing.
- In Secondary, pupils are taught to move through this process more quickly, including writing for speed and legibility.

c) **A deliberate approach to developing skills**

- Leaders have in place deliberate systems, curriculum, schemes and approaches for teaching and learning vocabulary.
- Leaders have in place deliberate systems, curriculum, schemes and approaches for learning handwriting and spellings.
- Teachers and leaders make sure there is space to develop writing stamina in curriculums.
- Teachers support pupils' development of academic writing as appropriate to the discipline and phase.
- Pupils are taught when, where and how it is appropriate, or not, to use artificial intelligence tools and other resources to inform their writing.

d) **A marking and feedback policy**

- There is a marking and feedback policy in place, which provides guidelines to teachers on providing feedback on written work.
- Teachers provide regular feedback to pupils on their written work and challenge where they have not included expected elements, for example ensuring all written work demonstrates basic punctuation.
- Teachers use a strategic approach to marking and feedback when it comes to marking written work, recognising that less can be more, and that commenting on every error can risk undermining pupils' confidence or ability to self-reflect.

e) **Aiming high**

- There is a culture of high expectations from all staff about the quality of written work that pupils produce, based on an understanding of the levels they are working at and their prior attainment.
- Teachers take opportunities to reinforce key stage related expectations of written work, such as writing in sentences.
- Leaders recognise that success in writing is more likely if pupils see a WAGOLL of what they are being asked to write and what makes it a good one. Teachers routinely provide models and WAGOLLs for writing, in all contexts.

f) **Meaningful and purposeful writing**

- Teachers identify when there is a need to provide an opportunity for pupils to gather ideas or experience something before they can write about it.

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6. A writing environment: a culture of writing/writing for pleasure

- Opportunities are planned for pupils to take part in low stakes writing.
- Opportunities are designed for pupils to write for specific real-world purposes,
- Pupils are given the opportunities to write in different environments and across all subjects, including (and perhaps particularly) those that are not always associated with writing, so it can remove the fear and negative associations that some pupils have with writing.
- Pupils have opportunities to write creatively in enrichment and extra-curricular activities.
- Care and attention is given to the importance of motivating pupils to write.
- Staff visibly model a writing culture in everyday use, so that pupils can see the importance as well as well as the transactional nature of writing.

CPD, Support and Training

School and Trust Leaders will:

- provide regular professional development opportunities to help staff deepen their knowledge of writing and approaches to literacy.
- establish mentoring and/or coaching opportunities where staff can work collaboratively to guide and support professional growth.
- Provide opportunities for shared networking and moderation.
- Signpost to further documentation relating to the successful implementation of our tools in each specific learning context via the TSAT TTL intranet and in each school for specific contextual application.

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Responsibilities of Headteachers & Regional Directors

Headteachers are responsible for:

- Managing the effectiveness of the TEP for the posts within their structures
- Establishing effective communication and collaboration within their school and region
- Working with their teams to create local policies which adhere to the TEP and ensure its effective delivery.
- Effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the TEP and associated policy within their school.
- Ensuring all staff are clear on expectations of this TEP, the local policy and the school's principles.

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The Trust's Enhanced TEP

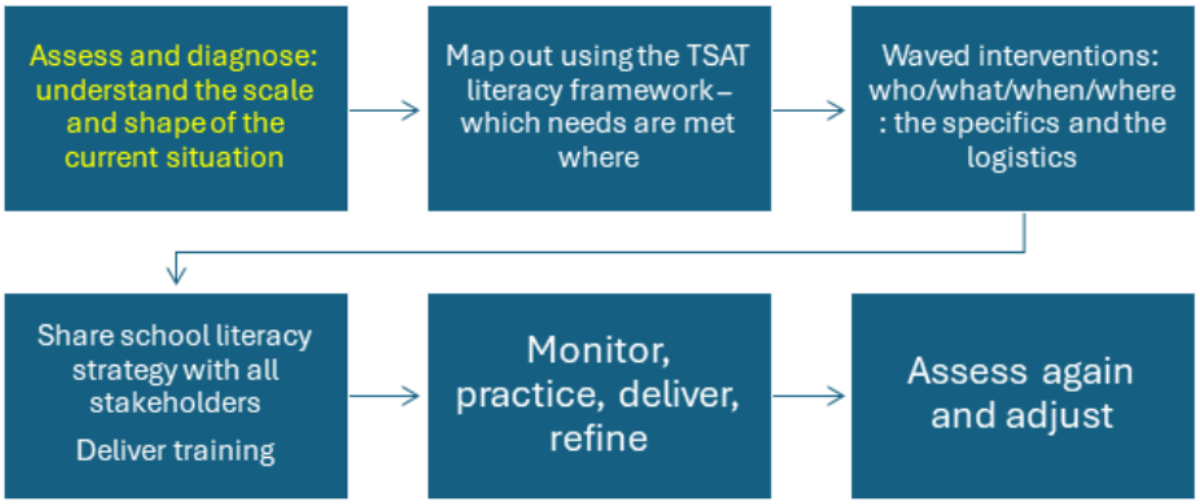
The enhanced provision is a series of TSAT preferred frameworks and toolkits that capture evidence based and research informed best practice from across the sector from within and beyond our schools.

In addition, for each of the priority areas of Literacy, examples of preferred best practice are identified and collated, alongside case study examples from our schools.

If a school is not meeting the Writing core TEP threshold/success criteria, Headteachers and school TTL leaders will liaise with the Executive team, usually via Regional and Deputy Regional Directors, to set out a specific action and implementation plan and most appropriate preferred best practice identified for the specific area(s) of need.

For identified schools, this may include, but will not be limited to, support for the leadership of writing with supported audits/observations of current position and identified areas for improvement.

Schools may wish to use the following flow map to assess their progress:



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Conditions for moving to the Trust's Enhanced TEP

The following are indicators of the criteria that will be applied to determine those schools who need to respond to the enhanced provision:

Primary schools:

- KS2 English is below national and/or showing a declining trend.
- GLD at end of EYFS not at national expectation because of language and communication scores.
- School do not have capacity for leadership of literacy/writing due to absence of leader or concerns around leadership.
- Leadership of early writing and appropriate interventions are identified as a concern through internal and external reviews.

Secondary schools:

- English progress scores or outcomes at GCSE are an area of concern, particularly if lower than elsewhere in the school and/or national.

All schools:

- Schools have limited or ineffective mechanisms in place for assessing, diagnosing, monitoring or putting in place support for struggling writers or those who have not secured Foundational skills.
- Where internal or external quality assurance, as set out by the *Quality Assurance Policy (insert link)* identifies an issue or a concern with writing, literacy and/or English at a school, phase or departmental level.
- There is no coherent school framework to implement, monitor and review, effective writing strategy and therefore, the core policy is not enacted or evident in application and implementation.
- Measurable thresholds that are identified in other policies but have a direct link to the quality of reading and literacy (i.e. *Thinking, Teaching and Learning, SEND* or *Outcomes*) are not met.

Schools not meeting the above criteria will be subject to the enhanced provision.

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Toolkits available

Literacy support and resources are available on the TSAT intranet.

This will include the following resources:

- A writing skills audit for teaching staff
- Recommendations for specific assessment pathways
- A menu of strategies and support (a toolkit) matched to specific need i.e. software, programmes or apps, for example what works for i.e. Handwriting and spelling interventions
- A toolkit showcasing suggestions for effective practice

Development Resources

- Professional development opportunities signposted and shared via the intranet to support colleagues with building their understanding and skills
- A partner primary school allocated to provide support to Secondary schools with strategies to support early and developing writers

Specialist QA support

- A writing and literacy review carried out by a member of the EST or associated colleagues
- An early writing review carried out by a member of the EST or associated colleagues

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Equality Statement and Assessment

We are committed to being an inclusive employer enabling all staff to feel a sense of belonging.

We commit to ensuring our policies are inclusive by nature, are of benefit, accessible and understood by all staff. As a minimum we ensure our policies and practices comply with the Equality Act 2010 but we are committed to go beyond our minimum requirement of equality legislation.

Our policies aim to reduce and remove inequalities and barriers and create opportunities to maximise positive impacts on our staff, fostering greater social cohesion and greater participation in public life.

Through our actions we recognise, appreciate and value difference treating everyone fairly and seeking to embed a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion across our Trust which delivers the best outcomes for the diverse society in which and for whom we work. We are committed to undertake an equality impact assessment on all relevant policies.

Related Documentation

This TEP should be read in conjunction with the following related policies and TEPs:

- The Primary and Secondary Outcomes policies
- The SEND policy
- The Thinking, Teaching and Learning TEP
- The Reading and Literacy TEP