

# HEADTEACHER

## UPDATE

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## How to teach writing

The very act of putting pen to paper for some students can be overwhelming and difficult. Teaching students to write is about empowering them to take ownership of their work, but it is often neglected in the busy primary school classroom. In this *Best Practice Focus*, **Robbie Burns** looks at the core elements of great writing teaching



# Building strong foundations for the teaching of writing

There are seven aims of the national curriculum for English (DfE, 2013). In essence, it is hoped that students will learn to read, write and speak with fluency and accuracy for a range of purposes (Ofsted, 2022). In other words, by the end of their primary education, students should have developed a feel for the English language and have developed competent control of the way they use their words.

So how are we doing? The latest SATs results tell us that 71% of students met the expected standard in writing (DfE, 2023). That means, after eight years of education, 29% of students are moving on to secondary school this year working below the expected standard for writing. This is roughly in line with previous years. So, despite ambitious national aims, we are a long way off where we want to be.

In secondary school, in year 7, students will be bombarded with complex vocabulary, systems, processes, norms, and implicit assumptions about background knowledge and writing across disciplines they have yet to learn the rules of.

After years of writing exciting stories, information texts and biographies, they are now expected

to write essays, respond to comparisons between complex concepts, and form their own opinions. A daunting thought, especially for those who are not where they need to be according to national standards. These students are not only catching up with their peers, they are also learning all of these new things.

Even the very act of putting pen to paper for some students can be overwhelming and unbearably difficult. Letters, words, and patterns of language for some students aren't always expressed as easily on the page. Their ideas are there, strong opinions and reasons; they are just so complex to write down in the way they want to. We have all met these students. They are hindered by poor handwriting or other cognitive difficulties.

And this is assuming that these students have learned to accurately decode and comprehend what they read. As Quigley (2022) writes: "Every act of writing is a huge interrelated network of choices."

For this reason, teaching students to write is about empowerment to enable them to take ownership of the choices they make as they put down words on a page.

In a recent article, I outlined how

we as leaders and teachers, can create a coherent and well-sequenced English curriculum (Burns, 2023). Now in this *Best Practice Focus*, I will look specifically at what the research says about what makes great writing teaching.

It is about getting the balance right to make good writing happen over time so that every child can begin secondary school with solid foundations. I break this into four parts:

- Curriculum.
- Writing process.
- Grammar teaching.
- Assessment.

I cannot cover everything here, but I will cover what I have found to be the most important things in our development as a school to achieve excellence results consecutively over the past three years. I hope to weave together research, resources, and personal experiences of leading and teaching English to enable you to consider your approaches and ask yourself the question: Are we getting the balance right?

## 1, The curriculum

Before any discussion is had about writing pedagogy, it is important to briefly outline how to approach the mapping of the content to be taught. Structuring an English

curriculum can be complex. But it doesn't have to be.

The first pitfall to avoid is the metaphors we use to describe it. The idea of a curriculum as a narrative is popular and has merit. But in English, it is more akin to a spiralled rope, with depth of understanding, knowledge and skill over time being accumulated through increasingly more sophisticated tasks, purposes and ideas. At the heart of the spiral-of-rope metaphor are two key concepts that teachers and students should keep coming back to time and time again – reading for meaning and writing for purpose.

Writing for purpose is the idea that when we write, there is always a reason. Take this article as an example. I was asked to write about a whole school approach to writing. There are 100s layers and interrelated networks of choices that I have taken and not taken to write this article. As an educated adult, I can do this with a reasonable level of competency.

However as a child, I needed to be exposed to writing for a range of purposes and audiences. I also needed to have experienced writing a range of text types to be able to develop fluency in my communication through writing.



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Reading for meaning is the other core idea. Although not the focus of this article, it is worth mentioning that all the writing students engage in should come from their reading. It probably does even if we don't necessarily plan for it.

For this reason, the curriculum should proactively seek rich and meaningful texts and stimuli for students to be exposed to across a range of genres. The constant focus of the reading should never be just to decode fluently. The focus should always be what the words mean at several levels. This naturally crosses over into writing for purpose because as students (with their teachers) dissect the reading that they do, they will be more sharply aware of how they are writing for their own audiences. For more on reading, see my recent *Best Practice Focus* dedicated to whole-school reading strategies (Burns, 2022a).

Given our focus is on writing, it is important to briefly "unravel" the writing for purpose concept to look more closely at the sub-concepts that make it up. This will help frame our later discussion of the writing process. The idea of these two concepts being "ropes" is important (see figure 1). Ropes are made up of strands. These strands are woven together tightly to form the overall structure. If one of the strands is frayed, poorly formed, or even missing, the whole rope will struggle to achieve its purpose.

## Writing for purpose

**Composition and transcription:** Considered together, these refer to the substantive knowledge of writing, including spelling, punctuation, grammar and transcription (handwriting). It

Figure 1: Two conceptual ropes with sub-concepts help to bring coherence to the English curriculum (see Burns, 2023)

constitutes the core knowledge and terms we need to use to explain the English language.

**Purpose and text type:** This refers to all of the ideas that students need to know related to writing purposes and the forms of the text. For example, when we write to inform, students need to know how to structure their chronological or non-chronological report. This represents the disciplinary knowledge of the subject of English – what it means to be "a writer".

**Writer's craft:** This refers to the study of how writers use language in more nuanced ways beyond simply the conventions of the text type or the purpose and refers to the way in which writers use language to create imagery, the way they persuade, the way they inform, and the way they discuss. This represents a mixture of substantive and disciplinary knowledge in preparation for students being able to study literature more formally in secondary school. Examples of

"writer's craft" are figurative language such as metaphor, simile, personification, repetition, use of setting and character...

Why is this significant to the teaching of writing? Building an English curriculum is no mean feat. In my experience, the hardest work a primary English teacher does is steeped in the quality of the texts they choose and the way that they decide to sequence how their students learn to write.

Unlike other subjects, which are generally linear and progressive in metaphorical steps, English curriculum design must be balanced across a range of sub-concepts and equally rich in its depth of content. Being able to choose as a teacher from a plethora of content, foci, objectives and tasks is very difficult. Therefore, the better understanding that teachers have of what they are teaching, why they are teaching it, and how they are balancing the concepts in the way they are the better.

## A handwriting interlude

This past year, I have taught year 6. I distinctly remember after a week of our first unit of writing being stunned by the poor standard of handwriting from some students.

This problem stuck with me all year. To little avail, I have been unable to shift the poor handwriting in my class. We have achieved stellar results and are placed in the top 20% of schools in the country for writing, but there are several students who are now at secondary school with handwriting that is

almost illegible. This academic year we will be putting it right and I offer here a few reflections from our research on this issue.

First, handwriting is important. Can it really be said that a person is "literate" if they cannot form basic letter patterns on the page? Cognitively, writing by hand ensures that young learners master the alphabetic code more precisely. As students engage with the form of letters by hand, they learn about their structures and can then differentiate between similar patterns.

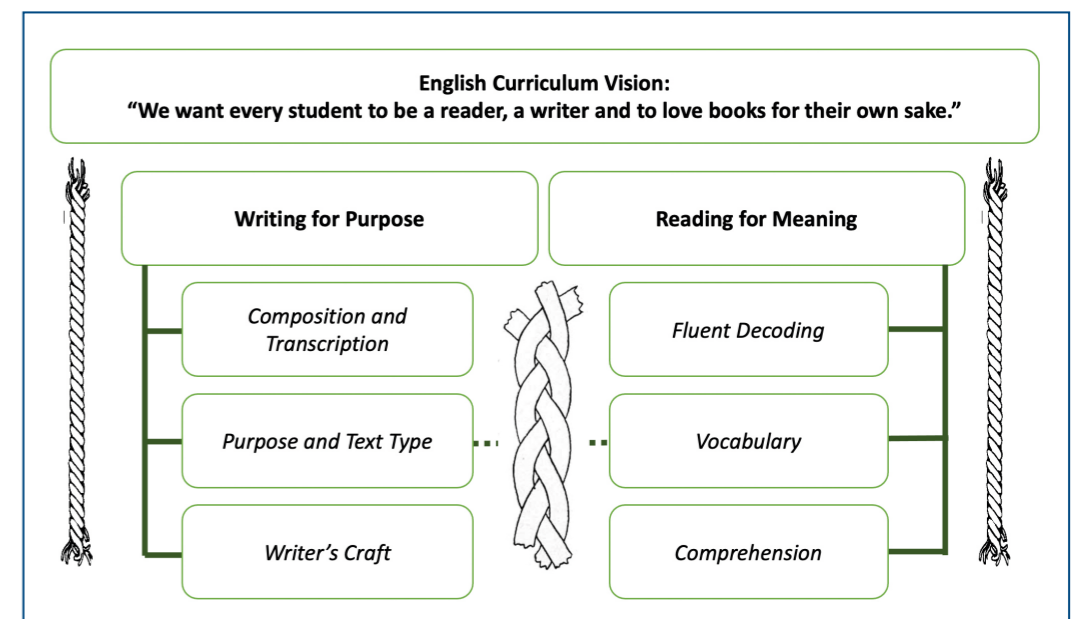
There are many high-quality schemes available to purchase for schools. One important point to make is that as we learn to write by hand, we are also in turn developing our reading comprehension since as we form letters at a young age we learn about their structures so that we can recognise them by sight rather than having to constantly decode them. Therefore, whatever scheme is used, it is important that students learn the letter formations that match the letter structures and patterns of the phonics scheme that the school uses. This will ensure no confusion for students about the letter forms and patterns and that their transcription complements their decoding.

In terms of effective handwriting pedagogy, I would highly recommend the National Association for Handwriting for its links to the research.

## 2, The writing process

### A tale of two classrooms

An important distinction to make ➤







about the pedagogy of writing is that although outcomes are important, the process should be the emphasis. What this means is that across a unit of work, the overall aim should not be about producing a perfectly written story that includes a wide variety of features, the aim should be to develop the knowledge, skills, and understanding that is needed to be a writer cumulatively over time. Let me explain what this means with examples from two classrooms:

**Classroom A:** Ms Jones plans a narrative unit based on the novel her class is reading. She writes success criteria and plans the unit progressively. She teaches each grammar element and writing feature that she wants students to learn and then gets them to draft and write their final piece. The focus of her explanation, questioning and discussion is about “including features” and “ticking them off the success criteria”. Her feedback is aimed at ensuring students master key learning. The editing process is led by features of the success criteria and she praises students who have used everything in their work.

**Classroom B:** Mr Halley plans a narrative unit. He roots the writing in a stimulus from a short film and begins with rich discussion about character and plot. He then develops success criteria with students that balance grammar and text type features. Once his class has settled on success criteria for this unit, he dives into thinking about purpose. He asks the big question – Why are

we writing? – in order to engage students in developing an understanding that the purpose of good narrative (story) writing is to entertain the reader. Mr Halley links everything he does to ensuring that the writing his students produce is entertaining, thoughtful and uses the features that he teaches in a way that will stimulate interest. Like Ms Jones, he then explicitly teaches the core content, but he doesn’t overdo it and leaves space for independence and innovation for his students. Students draft, edit and write. Mr Halley finishes the unit by reviewing in light of the purpose thus helping his students develop understanding about how they developed the use of each feature he taught.

Ms Jones has diligently developed a unit of writing that will secure good writing outcomes for her students. It is likely over time that students will develop a strong understanding of the basic grammar moves, sentence structures and text type features as they progress through the curriculum.

However, the issue is that it lacks conceptual depth and does not contribute to students being able to root their writing in a purpose. The unit also misses the opportunity for reflection on progress, discussion about the use of features and consideration of development points.

Because she has not rooted the unit of writing in the overall key concept of “writing for purpose” students will struggle to see the link between their narrative writing and their information text writing. They

will also struggle to see the link between using a feature in one type of writing for a particular purpose and using the same feature to achieve another purpose.

Mr Halley, meanwhile, has done everything that Ms Jones has done and more with very little further cost in time and energy. Because he focused his goal for the unit on a much higher plane, that of writing for purpose, he opened a new layer of learning and reflection. Mr Halley’s students were able to develop their understanding of how a feature, such as expanded noun phrases, could be used better in a descriptive scene in a narrative than in a scene to build tension. They were given the tools to be able to do this and to consider how and why they might edit with this in mind.

Process-led teaching, aimed at writing for a purpose, means that students develop the knowledge, craft, motivation, and skillset they need to become a writer, rather than simply writing to create a product of some kind.

**What the research says**

Since around 1970 the idea of a process-led pedagogy for writing has become commonplace. This approach has been influential in the UK, informing many curriculum models and teaching strategies (Wyse et al, 2018). In fact, the writing composition element of the national curriculum (DfE, 2013) proposes a simple five-step process:

1. Plan: Collect ideas and map out a piece of writing.
2. Draft and write: Write a first draft, follow a plan and innovate ideas.

3. Evaluate and edit: Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the a first draft and make improvements.
  4. Proof-read: An opportunity for children to check for spelling and punctuation errors.
  5. Perform: Encourage children to read their compositions aloud.
- The Education Endowment Foundation (2020, 2021) has provided greater detail for what each key stage might include, citing a large body of evidence telling us the impact that teaching these strategies has on the quality of writing outcomes. This includes:
- Prewriting activities (KS1)
  - Drafting, revising, editing (KS1)
  - Sharing (KS1)
  - Planning (KS2)
  - Drafting (KS2)
  - Sharing (KS2)
  - Evaluating (KS2)
  - Revising (KS2)
  - Editing (KS2)
  - Publishing (KS2)

Popular approaches to teaching writing, such as *Talk for Writing* or *The Write Stuff* are very much underpinned by the research outlined here and there are other writing processes that have been discussed by writers in recent years (see Quigley, 2022; Clements, 2023).

But I am advocating for a particular process, even though I will describe the approach we take as a school a little later. My aim is to argue first and foremost for the emphasis of the teaching of writing being primarily about enabling our students to become writers and not simply to “write”. By giving them routines and strategies most clearly demonstrated through a writing process of some kind, we are enabling them to generate their own ideas and thoughts – now, in secondary school, and beyond.

**Writing teaching is messy**

So far then it is tempting to think that good writing teaching involves selecting a process and then teaching in simple steps. But this would undermine an important nuance of the process-led approach – writing is messy and cannot be taught in a simple “step-by-step” way. The best writers, as shown from the research, go back and forth between phases before they would deem their work to be “complete”.

For example, when teaching writing in upper key stage 2, it is not uncommon for students to note

things on their plan for the next section of their biography as the ideas come into their head even though they are technically in the “drafting” phase of the process.

When students edit their work in response to something like whole class feedback, students may plan at this moment, jotting thoughts for how they will improve their writing.

They are not writing “wrong”; they are simply showing a sophisticated cognitive awareness of the processes that it takes to write well and messiness of the craft. It is impressive stuff.

In key stage 1, students constantly have to “say” their sentences, going back and forth between saying and writing and then editing and drafting.

In fact students are less aware of the sophisticated cognitive work they are doing as they think, say, write and then edit all in one lesson multiple times in response to a text they have read.

The writing process is far less drawn out across a series of lessons and more noticeable in one. Again, this is okay, this is normal, this is what writers do! Helping students see this is powerful. At such tender ages they are prone to seek their teacher’s approval. Learning to write presents a wonderful blend of creativity, following in the footsteps of great writers as well as following their teacher’s lead. Magical.

Therefore, with all this messiness in mind, it is important that teachers acknowledge that although they can guide their students and sequence lessons with the writing process in mind, they must allow for some flexibility across the phases of the process.

**Our approach**

After three years of development, as a school we have refined our systems so that we are able to adopt a consistent model for the writing process from early years through to year 6 (see figure 2). This has taken several iterations, but there were a few things we wanted in order to make it worthwhile.

First, we wanted to make sure that the process could be discussed by and with students. We didn’t want to use complicated language that students could not understand or use in their discussions with one another. Building on the research, we wanted to ensure that we were giving students the capacity to be able to not just develop the

grammar knowledge they needed but to internalise the process for themselves.

Next, we wanted to make sure our writing process was flexible. In key stage 1, students are able to do most of the elements of the writing process in one or two lessons, or at least across a week. Editing is highly scaffolded, but students can begin to develop the skills they need to be able to do this well.

In key stage 2, students grow in confidence and depth of understanding of the process, and units therefore take longer. It is hoped that in year 6, students need less and less support to internalise this process and so teaching becomes far more student-led.

What this means in practice is that the “learn” stage of the writing process is whole-class and collaborative, sharing ideas about how we could approach our writing. In addition, there might be some explicit teaching of one aspect of the success criteria, based on feedback that needs to be given.

But beyond this, the very loose writing process structure (see figure 2) to lessons is given and students are expected to simply write using their learning and the tools they have developed to create and refine their own work.

As I said earlier, the messiness of the writing process works within the overarching structure, giving students guardrails when they need them.

We decided that the pre-writing inspiring “hook” of a unit of work could simply be called “Learn”. During this time, students develop their understanding of the writing purpose, the text type, grammar features and craft that they will need as they write their story or information text. By calling it Learn we wanted to emphasise that at the

heart of good writing is the need to be inspired by the work of others and that writers are always learning. This is why we always begin with the “Learn” stage of the process.

Elsewhere, you will notice that there is no mention of “drafting” or “revising”. We chose not to include these two terms because we wanted students to see the drafting process as part of writing, learning that when we “write” it is not the finished piece, it is something that is developed, crossed out, changed, and considered carefully over time in light of the writing purpose. Therefore, the word “drafting” is used only in lesson time.

When students edit, we encourage them to do so on a range of levels. They can edit “as they go”, throughout the writing they are doing; they can edit for meaning, focusing on ensuring their writing makes sense; and they can edit for impact, aiming to increase their effectiveness in written communication.

By breaking down “editing” into three different layers, students, particularly at key stage 2, learn to look at their work on a range of levels, rather than simply just checking for full stops and capital letters.

The final part is the publish phase. We have an English book where everything is written and all of the phases of the process are included apart from the publish phase. For this, we give students a publishing book to enable them to create a presentation copy of a piece of writing of their choice once per half-term. Students write their piece out in a creative way and can illustrate it too.

Through the publishing book concept, we can support students to grasp that they are writers, authors even. They consider where

certain illustrations will go, what colours they will use, and how they will place the paragraphs on the page to best support their purpose.

We don’t over scaffold or “teach” these lessons and we let students develop their creativity over time.

**3, Grammar and syntax**

It is time to zoom in on a key aspect of writing teaching – grammar. In our own process, this would be part of the Learn phase. Since the latest iteration of the national curriculum, the teaching of grammar has been a core feature of every primary school syllabus.

One key learning we have been through is to consider the way in which we teach sentences. Before we look at this though, we will first consider good grammar pedagogy.

**The LEAD approach**

Grammar teaching should always be embedded meaningfully into the units of writing being taught.

Research suggests that discrete, prescriptive grammar teaching with a focus on learning and identifying terminology has minimal impact on children’s written communication (Myhill & Watson, 2014).

The core reason for this is that for students to deeply understand the language knowledge they need to communicate effectively, they need to develop a sense of grammar being a choice – as writers, we choose grammar to meet the purposes of our writing.

This is why Myhill (2021), citing Lefstein (2009) states that: “The goal of teaching is to support students’ understanding of (the) crucial relationship between grammatical choice and meaning-making, and to enable them to make choices from among a range of linguistic resources, and to be aware of the effects of different choices on the rhetorical power of their writing.”

With this in mind, Myhill et al (2020) suggest four interlinked ideas to form an overall approach to the process of teaching grammar in the classroom – the LEAD Principles.

**Link:** Making links between grammar and how it can be applied in the context of the writing being taught. For example, when teaching parenthesis, explaining to students that when we use this writing feature well, we add extra information to our sentences and this ensures we inform the reader with accuracy and clarity. ➤

**Figure 2. The research-based approach to the writing process that has been developed at Bede Academy**

Writing Process	Lesson Sequencing
Learn	Word of the Week: Start of each week in English lesson Identify context, purpose and audience Immerse pupils in quality models Use worked examples to instruct and model key elements of success criteria
Plan	Gather ideas for own writing (story map) Plan individually (or in groups) creating a clear outline and structure (story map)
Write	Independent writing
Edit	Edit writing – as you go, for meaning, and for impact
Evaluate	Evaluate writing (against purpose and success criteria)
Publish	Once per half-term





**Example:** Explaining the grammar with examples, rather than with detailed descriptions of the nuanced features of each aspect. For example, by showing how we can add parenthesis in the middle or at the end of a sentence using content from the context of the unit of work.

**Authenticity:** Making sure that the examples are embedded in the curriculum being taught, rather than them being context-free.

**Discussion:** Build in rich discussion where students are able to develop their understanding of how they can use grammar features effectively in their own writing.

Within the broader framework of the writing process, this is a helpful approach to follow when teaching grammar.

It enables teachers to explicitly develop student understanding in a context applied to the overall unit of writing that students are immersed in. It is helpful to ensure that the examples are taken from similar text types or even the text being studied.

Importantly, the final element of this approach is aimed at helping students grasp the importance of the effect that particular grammar choices students make have on the writing they are developing. This links the explicit teaching directly back to the overall purpose for the piece being developed.

**Syntax is central**

It is possible to take the list of national curriculum terminology for grammar and turn it into a progressively sequenced curriculum strand. This is important and a worthwhile pursuit but, if it does not acknowledge the development of syntax, combining words and phrases into sentences and developing this skill explicitly, then students may struggle to take their knowledge of grammar concepts and apply them directly to their own writing.

It is this skill, this confidence to manipulate, deconstruct, rework and play around with sentences which has enormous power for students as they learn to write. Syntax refers to the combination of the grammar of words themselves and the larger units of meaning built out of words – phrases, clauses and sentences.

Much of this knowledge will grow through talk and reading extensively. This means students will pick up some of their sense of syntax from simply being exposed to high-quality texts. For example, they will know how to speak in “full sentences” over time, but it is rare for them to have had explicit teaching in sentence construction that contributes to them being able to develop “a feeling for language”.

Clements (2023) draws on the German word “sprachgefühl”, which means “an intuitive sense of what is linguistically appropriate” to explain this idea more fully. When

writing teaching enables students to creatively develop this feeling of how sentences work, how we structure them in paragraphs, and what impact they will have on their reader across a range of purposes, I would argue the primary English curriculum has done its job.

Helping students understand the subtleties of the linguistic features of our language and learning the basics of manipulating them is a truly powerful thing to have in their toolbox.

In practice, then, the best way to achieve this is to develop a deep sense of the nature of a complete thought, a sentence. Rather than simply teaching a list of terminology that students can regurgitate on a test, giving students the feeling they need about how language works, best expressed through a focus on syntax is possibly the way forward.

We have seen great improvement in the learning of our students through the explicit teaching of syntax. Practically, this can be achieved in a plethora of ways.

A four-page pdf offering some ways that syntax can be developed over time is available to readers (see further information). As mentioned, it is important that these are embedded in the wider learning that students do in a unit of writing rather than being seen as standalone/discrete lessons, but they do offer a useful frame of reference for work that could be done over time.

One thing to mention with a bit

more detail here is the use of “sentence frames”. Once students can manipulate sentences, moving clauses and phrases around and considering their impact on the reader, it is helpful to give them frameworks to explore further sentence development.

Alan Peat has developed an extensive list, particularly helpful for narrative writing. Christopher Youles has developed this idea further in his book *Sentence Models for Creative Writing* (2023). I recommend this book as a resource to support the development of the teaching of syntax in your school as it offers a flexible model for teachers and students alike.

**4, Assessing writing**

Once students have progressed through our curriculum, broken down into units of work, there will be moments throughout the academic year where we need to take stock and consider where students are in their writing journey.

We will need to summatively assess their progress over time. This topic is notoriously thorny in primary education but I don’t believe it has to be.

I want to take a closer look at how we can accurately assess writing and ensure that our teaching is responsive to student need, getting the balance right between moving through the curriculum at pace and also being willing to stop and go over key learning again if needed.

In a previous *Best Practice Focus*, I have addressed whole-class feedback and the approach we take as a school so I won’t do this again here (Burns, 2022b).

Here, I want to look at the framework we have built to ensure our summative judgements of student writing are as accurate as possible (see figure 3).

**Comparative judgement**

Using the No More Marking platform once a year, we ask students to complete an unseen extended piece of writing that is nationally assessed with high degrees of accuracy. No prompting, planning or scaffolding is provided. A writing age and scaled score is provided.

Using the software, we compare and contrast two pieces of work at a time to decide which one is better. Over time, the system will rank these from the strongest piece of writing in the entire year group to the weakest.

How is writing assessed?			
Writing is assessed in two ways: Comparative judgement and teacher assessment			
Comparative Judgement		Teacher Assessment	
What?	Comparative judgement, delivered through No More Marking, is an unseen extended writing task that is nationally assessed with high-levels of accuracy. A Writing Age and Scaled Score is provided.	What?	When extended pieces of writing are completed, teachers use our assessment grids to identify where students have successfully “mastered” an area of the curriculum independently.
Why?	To give an accurate, objective judgement of writing in each year group measured against national standards. To support teacher planning and on-going writing pedagogy through the national analysis it provides.	Why?	To give an accurate measurement of how well students are learning the curriculum. To identify individual elements of progress throughout the school year towards the expected standard for that year group.
How?	Once per year, completed on scanned paper. No prompting, planning or scaffolding provided.	How?	On-going assessment based on writing that is independent. Information used to improve the responsiveness of lessons.

We have used this for several years now so we are also able to understand the progress that students are making over time.

There are real strengths to this. We can assess large quantities of student work in very short timescales. The comparison is supposed to be done reasonably quickly, so the “snap judgement” of teachers is used to consider the overall quality.

Other strengths of this system include a whole staff team being able to look at writing from all year groups and having a much larger amount of assessors looking at writing to increase the accuracy.

However, we felt that this was not enough and that it was important to also include standard teacher assessment systems.

**Teacher assessment**

Every time an extended piece of writing is completed, we use assessment grids which map the curriculum expectations across the academic year to track the gaps students might be developing.

For example, as already stated in the first section, our curriculum

follows a spiral model where students will develop their understanding of sub-concepts under the broader key concept of writing for purpose. Our grids therefore track the progress of, for example, composition and transcription over time.

The purpose of this is to give an accurate measurement of how well our students are learning the curriculum. Whereas comparative judgement will measure the overall writing skill and complete independence, teacher assessment checks the progression of learning over time and enables us to identify individual elements of grammar or writing craft we need to focus on with each student.

**What has been the impact?**

The impact of this system has first been reduced workload for staff. Teachers still have to check books and mark where needed, but we are trying to ensure that if and when we do this it is meaningful and actually improves teaching.

It has also increased the accuracy of our judgements at an individual, team and whole-school level. This is

**Figure 3: How writing is assessed at Bede Academy, using comparative judgement and teacher assessment**

significant because it ensures that students do not arrive in upper key stage 2 falling drastically behind their peers without us knowing. The system ensures that we are able to respond and intervene. Our assessment systems have also ensured we balance the way in which we assess between accurate AI-informed metrics and teacher knowledge.

We are, of course, still developing and fine-tuning the way that we use this system but we do very much feel like we are on the right track and striking the right balance.

**Final thoughts**

Whether you use an approach developed by experts in the field or have developed your own, the important point is we remember where our students will end up: in secondary classrooms expected to write at length in a range of different disciplines, using highly specialised vocabulary and phrases.

Therefore, we must always ask ourselves as we look closely at our curriculums, our writing processes, our grammar teaching: are we doing and have we done enough to equip our students with what they need to communicate well? Have we given them the sprachgefühl that they need?

In other words, did we get the balance write?

**INFORMATION & REFERENCES**

- ▶ To download the syntax pdf with sentence task types as cited in this article, visit <https://tinyurl.com/52ymfp6y>
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