Ratho Primary School

Big Writing

Parent Guide

Big Writing

Big Writing is a whole school initiative to encourage children to become independent and expert writers. This booklet aims to explain this approach and to answer any questions that you may have.

As a parent, you are your child's first teacher. Your help at home is very important in supporting the work carried out at school. This booklet will give you some useful and helpful ideas about how to have fun with your child as he/she learns to write. The ideas that follow can be enjoyed at any time and in any order.

These skills will help your child to become proactive in their own learning and to explain their thoughts.

Writing is a major part of the curriculum and along with reading, listening and talking, makes a significant contribution to the development of children as thinkers and learners.

Writing involves a set of complex skills that will not develop without structured teaching and practice. At Ratho Primary School we are using the Ros Wilson approach to writing, called Big Writing. Big Writing focuses on four main aspects of the writing process (VCOP) and gives the children the

skills to improve their writing through self-assessment.

Children are taught in class which specific vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation will be suitable for particular task or writing genre e.g. a story or an information sheet. They then go on to practise these in different ways such as through games, highlighting texts, or using them in their own writing.

So what does VCOP stand for?

V – is for vocabulary (ambitious 'WOW' words) and children are encouraged to widen their use of language to make their writing richer. In the classroom, new and expressive words are collected and shared.

C – is for connectives (joining words) such as and, because, so, besides, although, however, but etc. This makes writing more cohesive and interesting.

O – is for openers (opening your sentences in a variety of ways). Varying the way you open sentences makes them more engaging to read. There are three main ways of opening sentences – using connectives and words ending in 'ly' and 'ing'. Another way includes starting a sentence with a word ending in 'ed'. Openers vary in complexity as pupils move through the school.

P – is for punctuation – correctly using punctuation appropriate for age or level. Children are taught the names of the different punctuation and they learn how to use them to up level' their writing.

How can I help at home?

Here are some ways in which you can help your child at home with their writing:

- ✓ Talk! Talk! Talk! - ask children to describe anything and everything
- ✓ Write! Write! Write! –encourage them to write letters, a diary, email friends and family, send postcards, make lists, play vocabulary games, write stories and illustrate them .....
- ✓ Take the opportunity to comment on interesting use of VCOP when reading with your child
- ✓ Use a dictionary or a thesaurus to find interesting words to use
- ✓ Encourage children to think about how to improve work completed at home through use of VCOP

- ✓ Be prepared to explain new words to your child and give examples of how to use them
- ✓ Read often and widely with your child
- ✓ Encourage children to use phrases or words seen in a book in their own writing
- ✓ Look at a picture or photo and describe it; use it to tell a story