

# Rachel Madocks



## *Approaches to Writing*



For the staff and learners at Rachel Madocks school 'writing' will be interpreted as any activity that communicates and records events, experiences, information, thoughts and feelings.

This may include using words, symbols, pictures, objects of reference and tactile representations and may involve the use of a range of technology, such as computers, iPads, recording devices and communication devices as well as pen and paper. Visual cues including colour coded writing may also be used to support the development of individual pupils.

There are 2 strands to writing:

- a) The physical process. This involves the development of fine motor skills, mark making, hand writing and the physical production of letters and words.
- b) Writing for a purpose. This will include labelling, narrative writing, creative writing, factual and information writing and the recording of events, experiences, thoughts and feelings.

Writing as a means of recording, should be viewed as a cross curricular skill, which may be focused on through the English and communication curriculum, should be practiced, developed and generalised in other curricular areas and in a wide variety of different environments.

The aim of teaching writing at Rachel Madocks is for writing to be viewed as a functional skill and those elements taught and encouraged will be the most useful and relevant strands for each individual learner. In addition activities and skills taught should be engaging and motivating and based on an individual's interests and emerging skills. Creative writing opportunities should be an experience available to all students in a format appropriate to their developmental level and skills.

The general aims across the school are:

- To develop gross and fine motor skills.
- To be able to use an appropriate system to record experiences.
- To be able to communicate in the wider environment.
- To be able to participate in the creative experience.

Each individual should be given the experience and opportunity to use and develop their writing for a wide variety of purposes, using the relevant tools.

Writing should be taught both individually and to groups and should be reinforced and used functionally across the curriculum. There should be opportunities in English and Literacy work to teach and practice writing skills for most pupils.

There will be a percentage of the learners at Rachel Madocks School for whom traditional handwriting skills will be of great relevance but all learners should be working on using recording at some level.

It should be recognised that when a learner makes little progress with a particular method of recording or hand writing, then an alternative method should be investigated. Learners who are unable to write their names for example will be using other methods to record events and label their work.

There is a progression of skills required in writing and care should be taken to make sure the learners are ready to move onto the next stage of their development. However the progression is likely to be different for different groups of learners and for individuals. Progress will be most effective when skills are broken down into very small steps.

## **Handwriting**

Handwriting at Rachel Madocks will include the development of gross and fine motor skills from developing grasp and release to a pincer and tripod grip.

Early fine motor skills will be initially taught through Sunshine steps, the Waldon programme and then the Rainbow Road Scheme, a progressive developmental programme developing fine motor skills.

It will include making marks with a variety of media:

- Scribbling
- Colouring skills
- Over copying
- Writing patterns
- Letter formation
- Ability to write words and sentences unaided

## Writing for a purpose

This will form a developmental process from the earliest levels of development through to formal writing. These will include:

- Using a finger print, a stamp, a symbol or photo to label their own work or to record their presence or participation in an event.
- At a very early level it may include selecting an object of reference to add to a personal timetable to record what the individual has done (memory books) or has chosen to do next.
- Making marks to label and describe a picture or work.
- Opportunities for role play writing, for example making shopping lists, writing letters, taking the register in role play situations.
- Using a symbol strip, or 2 or more symbols to create a sentence or phrase.
- Using words to label and describe through using magnetic letters, words, printed word cards, copying words, using a scribe, their own writing or using a computer.

Writing should be closely related to and interwoven with reading.

Classroom and display labelling should conform to the agreed style of writing used throughout the school and outlined in the display policy. All learners should be encouraged and assisted to 'sign' their own work from all areas of the curriculum, with a personal mark, stamp, finger print or their name or initial letter as appropriate.