



## Writing Policy





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# Writing One-Page Overview


*Writing is so much more than pen to paper, it is the sharing of meaning through any and all tools.*

## Intent

 Develop written communication for all

 Writing as expression: marks, symbols, sentences


 Build skills step-by-step across four frameworks


 Promote creativity, function, and independence


Cann Bridge School's writing policy aims to:


- Develop every learner's ability to communicate thoughts and ideas through writing in any form.
- Recognise writing as a multimodal process, not limited to pen and paper.
- Scaffold progress from physical mark-making and symbol use to purposeful writing and structured expression.
- Foster independence, creativity, and real-world functional literacy.


## Implementation


 EYFS: sensory & motor skill development

 Engagement: experiential + symbol-based writing

 Progression: structured phonics & grammar

 Steps 4 Life: functional writing for adulthood


 Tools: Symbol cards, PECS, Communicate & Print


 Success not limited to paper & pen


Writing is developed across all stages of the Pathway to Independence:

- Early Steps: Focus on motor skills, sensory play, mark-making, PECS, Write Dance, and pre-writing symbols.
- Engagement curriculum: Continue with experiential learning using sensory, motor, and communication supports.
- Progression curriculum: Access discrete English lessons including phonics, early sentence building, functional writing.
- Steps 4 Life (KS4–Post-16): Emphasis on real-life functional writing: journaling, ordering, enterprise tasks, creative and letter writing.
- Writing supported through tools like Communicate & Print, symbol systems, and varied AAC methods.
- Use of Total Communication, and progression tailored through PLGs and B Squared tracking.

## Impact

 Learners grow in fluency and purpose

 Independence supported through writing skills

 Assess via PLGs, B Squared, Evisense

- Learners show progression in physical control, spelling, and composition skills across multiple media.
- Learner achievements are recorded via Evisense, PLG tracking, B Squared, and writing samples.
- Monitoring includes Governor review, moderation, professional dialogue and learner progress reviews.
- Writing is embedded across the curriculum, enhancing learners' independence and expressive ability.

## Introduction

*"Our education can be looked at another way! You are deluded to believe that school should occupy us, entertain us; but never teach us. We have the capacity to learn. It is not acceptable to say: "Be constrained by a sensory curriculum." Instead let us learn to write, learn to spell, learn to read. We cannot stagnate in special education! You should make our minds academically able..."*

– Jonathan Bryan

The Writing curriculum at Cann Bridge takes into account information from a wide variety of sources, including the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2022, Development matters 2021, Differentiated Learning Outcomes 2021, the 2021 National Curriculum, the Special Educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years, and established policies from outstanding education providers alongside conversations with experts in the field of writing development for learner with Severe Learning Difficulties. This is reflected in our Pathway to Independence curriculum.

### Definitions

Writing is the process of using symbols, such as letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces, to communicate thoughts and ideas in a way that others can read. Symbols used can be those from a typically known and widely recognised alphabet, or they may be an alternative form of symbol or communication. If others can understand and read the symbol-based communication, then it is writing.

Please see appendix for definitions of any acronyms or less widely used terminology used in this document, words appearing in the appendix will appear in **green**.

## Statement of Intent

At Cann Bridge school we recognise that learner with severe learning difficulties develop in unique and individualised ways and need to follow a curriculum which is carefully broken down into small steps with plenty of repetition, reinforcement and encouragement. Learners require repeated opportunities to consolidate new skills in order to transfer learning to a range of different experiences. Learning is adapted to encourage independence, life skills and communication as is reflected in our curriculum document "Pathway to Independence".

Learner often benefit from a multi-sensory approach to their learning, adapted to take account communication difficulties, physical and other sensory needs. Learning gives consideration to the atypical and often non-linear development of this group of learners.

Cann Bridge School is a Total Communication environment and in order to support the development of writing skills through a wide range of opportunities, takes into account additional physical, communication and sensory needs. The development of writing skills encourages three areas of progression, letter formation, punctuation/spelling and writing for a purpose.

We recognise that writing development starts far earlier than most naturally consider and that foundational skills are key to successful writing in later life. The prime areas of learning are key to stabilising learner's abilities and security in a learning environment and must be focused on first.

Within these, physical development skills are key to developing learner's ability to access writing materials and control movements effectively to mark make, type, select symbols or look with a purpose (for eye-gaze devices).

The assessment of our curriculum at Cann Bridge School is divided across four main assessment frameworks. Once learners have moved beyond the 'Early Steps' framework, and before they move into 'Steps 4 Life' in year 9 they will be working under either the 'Engagement Steps' or the 'Progression Steps' depending on if they are informal, semi-formal or formal learners. The frameworks follow our overall curriculum, but have different steps, challenges and focuses. Learners are likely to experience their learning in mixed classes of those on being assessed against the Engagement Model and Progressions steps and as such it is not uncommon, and indeed it is expected, to see writing delivered and experienced within a Cann Bridge classroom where learner may be accessing wildly different activities, but all with a focus on developing the same core writing skills linked to our curriculum.

Examples of opportunities and resources used might include a wide range of alternative writing methods including, but not limited to:

- Magnetic letters on magnetic boards
- ICT equipment including computers or tablets
- Symbol based communication systems including PECS or other AAC methods
- Symbol based cards.
- Sensory activities including Write Dance, Dough gym
- Games to develop fine and gross motor skills including Finger gym

## Implementation

### EYFS and Year 1

At Cann Bridge School we recognise the importance of an early play-based curriculum and the wide range of interlocking experiences and play-based activities that can lead to the skills, focus, physical development and understanding required to progress in writing.

The Cann Bridge School curriculum is detailed in our Pathway to Independence Curriculum document. Learners in EYFS and year 1 follow the 'Early Steps' framework.

Learner have individualised **Personalised Learning Goals (PLGs)**, but they are typically broken down into child-specific tailored smaller SMART steps. They are assessed against the framework within BSquared's online assessment system to demonstrate progress.

Early writing skills can be seen throughout the 7 areas of learning of EYFS, but are most specifically expressed through Communication and Language, Physical Development and Literacy.

Learners within EYFS and Key Stage 1 will explore the development of their physical skills to support writing in a vast range of activities, including, but not limited to:

- Write Dance – A development of both gross and **fine motor** skills through music-based movements involving both messy sensory experiences and mark-making with tools.

- Sensory experiences – individually tailored sensory experiences with an element of **gross** or **fine motor** control development, for example, exploring slime, climbing in the soft play area, hydro-pool sessions, toy manipulation and playdough sessions.
- **PECS** – **PECS** progression develops early writing skills from developing an understanding of symbols carrying meaning, to forming and sequencing words to form sentences with meaning and a purpose.
- **Phonics** – Those able to explore ‘phase 2+’ **phonics** will have some time exploring writing or recreating the **graphemes** they learn.

Learners within year 2 are assessed against the BSquared frameworks to determine if they should move as informal, semi-formal or formal learners onto the Engagement Model or Progression Framework (**see below**).

### **Year 2 and Key Stage 2**

At year 2 learners will follow one of two frameworks based on a baseline of skills assessment.

#### **Engagement Steps Framework**

Within the Engagement Steps learners will continue to learn and explore the world around them in a similar manner to the Differentiated Early Years Outcomes. Learners will also continue to have targeted **PLGs** tailored to their needs.

The Engagement Steps Framework will follow the same style and methods of learning as are explored within Early Steps. They are assessed against the Engagement model, and depending on their needs, will explore some of the whole school curriculum, but have their assessments and progressions supported and recorded against their engagement in learning opportunities rather than the specific learning sessions themselves. Over time, as they progress, they may move into semi-formal learning and be assessed against both their engagement and their acquisition of specific knowledge.

#### **Progression Steps Framework**

Semi-formal and formal learners following the Progression Steps Framework have been assessed as able to generalise learnt skills within a known environment and to combine concepts to make appropriate choices and decisions; they are working to access the National Curriculum at a below age-related expectation level. These learners will access learning through discrete traditional subject-based learning, while other skill development is cross curricular.

Within the Progression Steps Framework, learners will have more specific writing lessons with a focus on pre-writing skills, writing (in **phonics** and within specific sessions for a purpose) and using functional literacy. These may be explored in whole groups, smaller groups or one to one as educators feel is most appropriate to support each individual learner.

Examples of writing within the perceptive curriculum include:

- Exploring the links between **phonemes** and **graphemes**.
- Exploring how to put **graphemes** together to make words.
- Exploring how to put words together to make sentences.

- Write Dance
- Dough gym – developing muscle strength and control through manipulating playdough to music.
- Finger gym – developing muscle strength and control through a range of activities requiring finger coordination or force.
- Symbols to retell known stories or create new stories.
- Exploring poetry or rhymes.
- Writing in different contexts – i.e. for posters or when creating books.
- Exploring typing skills on a computer – Clicker 7 software.
- Functional **phonics** sight words (see reading policy) for writing day-to-day activities.
- Early grammar skills.

### **Steps 4 Life**

The Steps 4 Life Framework begins from year 9 and encourages learners to apply their skills and understanding to a wider environment, developing life skills and independence. Writing is discreetly explored as a Functional Skill but is also present across a wide range of independence-building sessions and activities.

Learners are encouraged to use and develop their functional communication and literacy skills, applying and further developing the skills they already have. They are given opportunities to communicate in a variety of suitably challenging situations, continuing to use a total communication approach. Learners are taught to develop their core writing skills, but also how to apply them in meaningful and useful ways. Experiences may include, but are not limited to:

- Creating their own personalised mark to form a signature.
- Forming sentences to express themselves.
- Writing about their day in school for their home-carer to see.
- Using symbols to answer questions about a story.
- Using symbols to fill in a sentence. i.e. “I liked *swimming* and *bus*. *Happy*.”
- Exploring and learning through Write Dance where appropriate.
- Using **PECS** to create “I want” or “I see” sentences.
- Creative writing.
- Writing letters to companies to support enterprise work.
- Completing order forms for enterprise work or bacon bar.
- Writing from within **phonics** group learning.
- Weekly journals.

Post Bridge College forms the upper age range of the Steps 4 Life Framework, and experiences of writing may be slightly different depending on individual needs. The English for Life programme is explored within this Key Stage and further details of this can be found within the Reading Policy. Examples of experiences within Post Bridge College are similar to those above, but may also include:

- NOCN qualifications
- Retelling stories by writing in paragraphs.
- Journaling/diary work with symbols or written text.
- Writing newsletters.

- Typing through specific or general software ('Communicate and Print' or MS Word).
- Exploring key 'English for Life' vocabulary spellings.

### **Staff support and training**

Cann Bridge School believes in the importance of appropriate staff training to enable staff to deliver effective Literacy. The Communication, Language and Literacy coordinator will access courses or INSET opportunities to assist staff involved in the delivery of Literacy following the School Improvement Plan.

## **Impact**

Writing is assessed formatively through observations and identifying next steps, with overall learning and outcomes assessed through summative assessments in December, March and June.

Writing is assessed and evidence of learning may be recorded in a range of ways, not limited to:

- Evisense online learning journeys.
- Writing Journals.
- Diaries.
- Work folders.
- **PLG** trackers.
- B Squared online assessment tool.

Parents are informed about learner progress through, parents' evenings and annual reviews.

### **Progression document**

At Cann Bridge School progression in Writing is individual. To support each learner's next steps in their development the school uses progression guidance based on the seven bands of the Differentiated Early Learning Outcomes (DEYO); appropriate Learning objectives from KS1 and KS2.

These elements are brought together to form the Cann Bridge School Writing Progression Guidance. Our Progression Guidance is a sequential document that supports the personal development of all our learners: from the most informal learner to the most complex or most able formal learner, and ultimately our most mature learners, preparing for life after Cann Bridge School.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of Writing**

We aim to provide a writing curriculum that is relevant and tailored to meet the needs of our learners, depending on their age and stage of personal development. For this reason, we regularly review the curriculum to evaluate its effectiveness and will inform parents of any revisions to the school policy or curriculum as required. Teachers will continually reflect on the effectiveness of our writing provision, and the Communication, Language and Literacy Coordinator will gather staff views through regular feedback. The Quality of Education Link Governor monitors our writing policy regularly. They report their findings and recommendations to the full governing body, as necessary if the policy needs modification.

## Links

The Policy has been developed in conjunction with other key policy documents listed below:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2022
- Development matters 2021
- 2021 National Curriculum
- Special Educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years
- Differentiated Learning Outcomes 2021

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Cann Bridge policies:

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Pathway to Independence Curriculum Policy
- Planning, Assessment, Marking, Recording and Reporting Policy
- English Policy
- Reading Policy
- Reading at Home Policy
- Total Communication Policy
- See Key Stage long term plans on the school website for the rolling English programme



## Progression Guidance for Writing

It is recognised that learner will not all develop within a consistent linear movement. The below is provided as a guide to the next steps only and should be used in conjunction with an understanding of the individual child. Progress within one area does not require completion or even part-completion in another area, and it should be noted again that whilst letter formation involves specific physical skill development, 'writing' in general does not have to involve pen/pencil to paper and punctuation/spelling and writing for a purpose can all be progressed through without any pens or pencils at all.

Letter formation	Punctuation / Spelling	Writing for a purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a reflex action.</li> <li>• Demonstrate intentional movement.</li> <li>• control movement from shoulder (whole arm).</li> <li>• Control movement from shoulder to the elbow (<b>gross motor</b>).</li> <li>• Control movement from elbow to the wrist. (<b>gross motor</b>).</li> <li>• Control movement from wrist to fingers. (<b>fine motor</b>).</li> <li>• Make circular and straight-line patterns in the air.</li> <li>• Cross the <b>midline</b>.</li> <li>• Manipulate tactile materials with <b>fine motor</b> skills e.g. squeezing, pushing, poking, rolling.</li> <li>• Demonstrate hand-eye coordination e.g. posting, jigsaw puzzles, pegboards.</li> <li>• Make marks in tactile materials with the whole hand.</li> <li>• Attempt to use tools to create marks.</li> <li>• Use <b>Palmar grasp</b> to hold mark-making tools.</li> <li>• Make random marks in different directions.</li> <li>• Copy or make prewriting pattern shapes.</li> <li>• Distinguish between different marks they make.</li> <li>• Begin to attach meaning to marks they have made.</li> <li>• Make marks that look like familiar letters or numbers.</li> <li>• Use <b>Digital grasp</b>.</li> <li>• Write with a mix of letters, mock letters and numbers.</li> <li>• Take cues from environmental and classroom print.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy letters and words from environmental and classroom print.</li> <li>• Attempt to write the initial letter of a familiar word e.g. own name, mum, dad.</li> <li>• Use or know the correct initial letters to form words e.g. I w h (I went home).</li> <li>• Use correct first and last letters to represent words e.g. dg (dog).</li> <li>• Segment spoken words into most <b>Phonemes</b> and represent these by <b>Graphemes</b>.</li> <li>• Spell some words correctly with others <b>phonetically plausible</b>.</li> <li>• Start to write familiar words such as their name and other words of personal importance.</li> <li>• Use phonic knowledge to write words in ways that match their spoken sounds.</li> <li>• Write some <b>irregular common words</b>.</li> <li>• Spell words phonetically using <b>medial sounds</b> e.g. Mi cat is brn (brown).</li> <li>• Write strings of letters that move across the page from left to right and top to bottom.</li> <li>• Demonstrate an awareness of the sequence of letters, symbols or words.</li> <li>• Group letters together with spaces in between to represent words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know and recognise uses of writing for different purposes e.g. a shopping list, a birthday card.</li> <li>• Give meaning to marks as they draw and paint using their preferred mode of communication.</li> <li>• Arrange marks on paper intentionally.</li> <li>• Talk about ideas (that they would like to write/have written down).</li> <li>• Speak in simple and compound sentences orally, or using <b>AAC</b>.</li> <li>• Compose short phrases and simple sentences orally, ready for transcription.</li> <li>• Express ideas in simple sentences to be read by themselves and others, using <b>AAC</b>, if appropriate.</li> <li>• Understand that written messages remain constant e.g. able to recall the general meaning each time it is re-read.</li> <li>• State purpose and audience of their own writing e.g. 'I'm writing a letter to my brother'.</li> <li>• Construct written messages for a range of purposes.</li> <li>• Make simple additions, revisions and proofreading corrections to their writing.</li> <li>• Begin to use some of the conventions of different text forms, e.g. letters, emails, narratives.</li> <li>• Combine transcription with a good understanding of composition.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a dominant writing hand.</li> <li>• Make most letters recognisable (some letters may be reversed at this level).</li> <li>• Use <b>Tripod grasp</b>.</li> <li>• Form letter shapes correctly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space letters correctly to form words and sentences.</li> <li>• Use correct directionality (left to right, top to bottom).</li> <li>• Recognise and use some capital letters in any place.</li> <li>• Sequence words to form a basic sentence (either words created themselves or words already available).</li> <li>• Write more than one sentence which can be read by themselves and others, using <b>AAC</b>, if appropriate.</li> <li>• Know that different letters can all make the same sound e.g. ai –rain / ay –clay / a-e –maze.</li> <li>• Use capital letters and common punctuation correctly, e.g. full stops, question marks, exclamation marks and speech marks.</li> <li>• Use common punctuation consistently and correctly throughout, as well as apostrophes for <b>contraction</b> (e.g. do not = don't).</li> <li>• Begin to join sentences with coordinating <b>conjunctions</b> such as 'and' and 'but'.</li> <li>• Use some <b>subordination</b> (e.g. when / if / that / because) to join clauses.</li> <li>• Add 'ing' and 'ed' to the end of the words.</li> <li>• Use the plural rule for adding 's' or 'es' e.g. cats/foxes.</li> <li>• Use present and past tenses mostly correctly and consistently.</li> <li>• Use a dictionary to check the spelling of uncommon or more ambitious vocabulary.</li> <li>• Add <b>suffixes</b> to spell most words correctly in their writing (e.g. –ment, –ness, –ful, –less, –ly).</li> <li>• Use paragraphs to organise ideas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use other cohesive devices to make the writing more varied and interesting, e.g. time, place and manner (how); pronouns (he /she /it); synonyms.</li> <li>• Use verb tenses consistently and correctly.</li> <li>• Write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences.</li> <li>• Use those conventions of writing that are characteristic of the form, e.g. a letter will have the sender's address; the date; the salutation 'dear...', etc.</li> </ul>
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## APPENDIX – Definitions

**AAC** – Augmentative and Alternative Communication – This is a range of strategies and tools used to support those without, or with limited, verbal communication. It may include picture or symbol-based representations of words or objects, the use of widely available IT such as tablet devices or computers, the use of highly specialised software on IT, or specialised IT devices. It can also include low-tech communication tools.

**Digital grasp** – Holding a mark-making material (or another object) with all fingers and the palm turned to face the writing surface.

**Conjunction** – A word used to connect two clauses (basic simple idea) of a sentence. i.e. ‘and’ or ‘but’.

**Contraction** – Making a word or words smaller through punctuation. For example – ‘I do not’ becomes ‘I don’t’.

**Fine motor** – This is a reference to physical skills to control fingers and hands to manipulate objects with control.

**Grapheme** – See **phonics** and **phoneme**. A **grapheme** is a **phoneme** written down. It may consist of a single letter or multiple letters. There can be numerous ways to write down an individual **phoneme**.

**Gross motor** – This is a reference to large body movements, such as arm movements, and requires muscle development. In writing this is a pre-requisite to **fine motor** abilities (see above) but is often also developed alongside.

**Irregular common words** – Common words in English that are ‘irregular’ because they do not follow typical rules taught in **phonics**. Examples of this include: are, was, his, I, you, were.

**Makaton** – **Makaton** is a language program that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable individuals to communicate. Within Cann Bridge School **Makaton** physical signing is used by both staff and many learners to support clear communication.

**Medial sounds** – a sound that is found in the middle of a word. For example, ‘o’ from God.

**Midline** – An imaginary line drawn vertically down the middle of a person. ‘Crossing the **midline**’ means to reach with your left hand to something on the right or vice-versa. Being able to do this is a significant developmental milestone.

**Palmer grasp** – Holding a mark-making material (or another object) across the palm with all fingers.

**PECS** – Picture Exchange Communication System – An example of the above. This is a widely used system involving the learner using individual symbols to communicate with. It has a range of phases within it which include sentence construction, requesting, commenting and asking/answering questions.

**Personalised Learning Goals (PLGs)** – These are a fundamental aspect of our educational approach at Cann Bridge School. Every learner is provided with Personalised Learning Goals, which encompass a diverse range of personal targets, including essential soft skills for life, academic targets, and objectives directly aligned with their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes. These targets are agreed upon with parent carers, and therapists where appropriate. Overarching targets are discussed and set during the EHCP Annual Review, and these are then broken down into smaller achievable termly steps by teachers.

**Phoneme** – See **phonics**. A **phoneme** is the name for an individual sound that is made or heard.

**Phonetically plausible** – Something written or formed that uses phonetic sounds that make sense for that word, but are not the correct English spelling. See **phonics**.

**Phonics** – A method to teach individuals to read and write involving the understanding of the individual units of sounds that words are broken down into. See reading policy.

**Subordination** – A type of **conjunction** (see above) used to join two clauses to form a more complex sentence where the second clause is less important than the first. i.e. although, because, since.

**Suffix/Suffixes** – An ending added to a word which changes it to a different word or type of word. I.e. adding 'ly' to quick to form quickly.

**Tripod grasp** – Typical mature mark-making hold with mark-making material (or another object) held between 2 fingers and thumb (or more fingers if not yet a fully mature tripod grasp).