



# BIG Writing Parent Workshop

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Ms Naz



# What is BIG Writing?

- ❖ It is a philosophy about writing which was originally devised by Ros Wilson (a former teacher and Ofsted Inspector).
- ❖ It is based on the premise that to write well children need to be able to talk. They need to 'have a go'.
- ❖ It is a way to assess children's writing and provide targets for 'next steps'.
- ❖ The same assessment criteria is used across the school and the staff hold moderation sessions where they look at samples of work and affirm the assessments made.

# Children are encouraged to...

- ❖ **Talk** about what they will write about
- ❖ **Find** exciting 'wow' words that they can use in their writing
- ❖ **Borrow** exciting words and phrases from authors
- ❖ **'Have a go'** at using interesting punctuation
- ❖ **Identify** with a range of different genres
- ❖ **Re-read** their own writing and find ways to up level it
- ❖ **Understand** what they need to do next to improve their work
- ❖ **Assessment** – use of teacher and pupil assessment

## What are the key elements of Big Writing?

Every week the children concentrate on the four elements of Big Writing:

**V C O P**

**“We must remember our VCOP!”**



# V – Vocabulary

- ❖ Selecting exciting, challenging, different words and phrases to be used in their writing.

The sky was gloomy and dark, not a single star could be seen for miles.

The great big, scruffy dog ran through the park.

# C - Connectives

Children are taught to use a range of words and phrases which connect and extend ideas.

I have a cat **and**.....

I don't have a fish **when**.....

I want a monkey **because**.....

I can't have a pig, **therefore**,.....

# O - Openers

❖ Story and sentence openers which are interesting and excite the reader.

❖ **He walked into the room.**

# Consider these sentence openings



He walked quietly into the room trying not to disturb the sleeping kitten. Then he saw that the kitten was softly curled up on top of the discarded coats of the children. Then he cautiously bent down to get closer. Then he saw the small collar around its neck with the lucky charm. Then he picked it up carefully whilst it still slept then ...



# Openers

- ❖ There are different ways to open a sentence
- ❖ one is 'ly' starters.
- ❖ Cautiously, he crept into the room not wanting to frighten the sleeping kitten.
- ❖ Can you think of some sentences that start with one of these openers?

**Anxiously ... Hurriedly ... Viciously ..**

# Openers

- ❖ Another opener could be an **'ing'** word
- ❖ Tiptoeing across the room, he tried to reach the sleeping kitten without startling it.
- ❖ Have a go with these **'ing'** starters.

❖ **Screeching ... Snoring ... Smiling ...**

# Openers

- ❖ Connectives can be used to open sentences too.
- ❖ Although he wanted to cuddle the sleeping kitten, he had to be careful not to frighten her.
- ❖ Try to use one of these to open a sentence ...
- ❖ **After a while... Finally ... Unlike ...**

# Openers

- ❖ Sentences can be opened by telling us where ...
- ❖ **At the end of a winding lane stood a derelict cottage.**
- ❖ **In the dark, narrow alley way behind the old, abandoned church a faint light could be seen.**
- ❖ Can you think of other sentences that start of like this?

# Other literacy techniques

- ❖ Similes
  - ❖ Alliteration
  - ❖ Metaphors
  - ❖ Personification
  - ❖ Rhyme
  - ❖ Onomatopoeia
  - ❖ Imagery
  - ❖ Puns
- ❖ These techniques are used in a range of different genres that are studied at our school

# P - Punctuation

Different kinds of punctuation which adds to all types of writing:

- ❖ Full stop (.)      comma(,,,) )
- ❖ Question mark (?)      exclamation mark (!)
- ❖ Apostrophe (‘)      speech marks (“ hello”)
- ❖ dash (-)      ellipses (...)
- ❖ Colon (:)
- semi-colon (;)
- brackets ( )



# The BIG Writing lesson:

Big writing happens once a week with children being encouraged to write at length using all the skills they have learnt. In this way they will be building their writing stamina and experimenting with a variety of genres from reports, persuasive text and instructions, to character descriptions, creative writing, poetry and story writing.

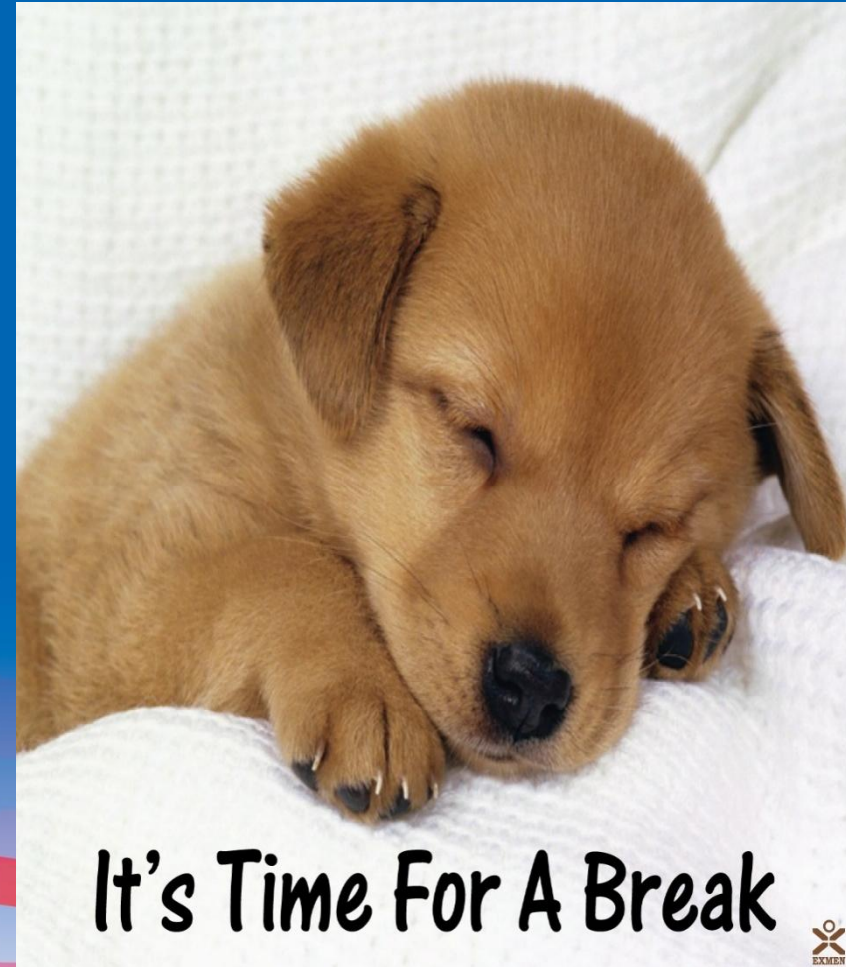
# What happens?

- ❖ The sessions are split in to **2** parts.
- ❖ **PART 1** – The children play games, talk for writing and verbalise a plan for what they will write.
- ❖ They discuss success criteria (steps/criteria needed to make a good piece of work). This session is fast paced, active and fun!



# BREAK TIME:

The children have a ten minute break where they can stretch their legs, cool off and prepare themselves for session 2



It's Time For A Break

# Part 2:

- ❖ The children sit in a calm atmosphere and write.
- ❖ The classroom has soft background music, low level lighting and a lit candle.
- ❖ The children have 'brain breaks' where they can look at the candle or have a stretch and make sure they have included punctuation etc.
- ❖ The teacher gives reminders at various intervals.

# How long do we write for?

**FS** - children have talk time where sentences are scribed and punctuation, clever words etc are added. Much of this is 'incidental' and will happen through the day rather than at a dedicated time.

**Year 1** have a 'Big Talk' session, where ideas are generated and built with the teacher's support. By the end of Year one the children will talk and then write for 30 minutes.

- ❖ **Year 2** - talk and plan for 30 minutes and write for 30 minutes. This will build towards 45 minutes by the end of Year two.
- ❖ **KS2** talk and plan for 45 minutes (35 minutes VCOP, 10 minutes planning). Throughout KS2, children will continue to write independently for 45 minutes

## **Teachers:**

Teachers are able to assess using the same criteria.

From the assessments, teachers can extract targets and next steps for the children to work towards.

Assessment will help the teacher to plan for future lessons.

## **Children:**

Children can improve their stamina for writing.

Children are aware of their successes and where they can improve.

Children's self-esteem and 'have a go' attitude is nurtured.

# How can you as parents help?



- ❖ **Encourage** your children to READ.
- ❖ **Encourage** your children to TALK.
- ❖ **Encourage** your children to spot WOW words and perhaps write them down in a book at home or on a piece of paper.
- ❖ **Encourage** your children to borrow words or phrases which they like from books, magazines, television programmes.
- ❖ **Encourage** your children to WRITE.
- ❖ *Spend time with your children doing the weekly homework!*

# Food for thought!

- ❖ *The gift of speech is the greatest gift you can give your child, apart from the gifts of happiness and good health.*
- ❖ *Talk is our language on paper. The better we can talk, the better we can write.*
- ❖ *The more words we know and the richer the words we have, plus our confidence in using language for effect, influences how well we succeed in life.*

# Thank you! Any questions?

