

Writing Packages in Common Use in Schools?

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Writing in classrooms



Class demands



Cultural expectations

Classroom environment

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Writing Packages/Programmes

In this pamphlet we have identified all the writing packages/programmes that are currently in press and we were able to access. These are structured materials that are sold or produced with specific aims. We are not including any information related to general approaches to teaching, reading programmes or curriculum differentiation. These are covered elsewhere.

Many of these packages/programmes that we have identified are evidence informed. That is, they have been derived from the current understanding of the skills pupils need to be able to write effectively. Nonetheless we were unable to identify any proper controlled studies which speak to their individual or combined effectiveness – although some contained elements that have been identified to be effective. It is not unusual in education to find packages that have not been evaluated systematically. However, it does mean that teachers and policy makers need to think very carefully about **why** they are using the package and **how** they will evaluate whether it is working for their pupils.

Packages and programmes can be considered in relation to the various reviews of the strategies and processes which have been shown to support children's writing (Cutler & Graham, 2008; Graham, Harris, et al., 2008; Graham, Harris & Hebert, 2011; Graham & Hebert, 2010; Graham, Morphy, et al., 2008; Graham & Perin, 2007). Professionals may wish to compare the packages and programmes with these reviews.

There are a number of key questions that should be answered before embarking on the use of a package or programme.

a) Teachers need to know -

1. What skills in the writing process they are targeting
2. How the package directly addresses these skills

b) It is also important to consider whether the package will be used as intended or whether specific aspects of the package will be focussed on. To do this there are several questions which should be asked prior to purchasing any writing package/programme

1. What research evidence is there to support the current package/programme?

Is the evidence strong e.g. a controlled trial?

2. Is the package/programme suitable for the pupils I am working with?

Has it been trialled with bilingual children, pupils with SEN etc. ?

3. Do my pupils have the requisite skills to benefit from the package/programme?

Levels of reading or spelling required word processing skills?

4. Will the package/programme be implemented in the manner and duration intended ?

It is important to ensure that the key aspects of the package are included to ensure fidelity of implementation?

5. How will the efficacy of the package/programme be evaluated?

Regular and continuous monitoring is a key aspect of supporting writing.

Reviews of effective writing

Cutler, L., & Graham, S. (2008). Primary Grade Writing Instruction: A National Survey. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100*, 907-919. doi: 10.1037/a0012656

Graham, S., Harris, K. R., Mason, L., Fink-Chorzempa, B., Moran, S., & Saddler, B. (2008). How do primary grade teachers teach handwriting? A national survey. *Reading and Writing, 21*(1-2), 49-69. doi: 10.1007/s11145-007-9064-z

Graham, S., Harris, K., and Hebert, M. A. (2011). *Informing writing: The benefits of formative assessment. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act report*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Graham, S. & Hebert, M. (2010). Writing to read, Evidence for how writing can improve reading. Report to the Carnegie trust. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Graham, S., Morphy, P., Harris, K. R., Fink-Chorzempa, B., Saddler, B., Moran, S., & Mason, L. (2008). Teaching spelling in the primary grades: A national survey of instructional practices and adaptations. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*(3), 796-825. doi: 10.3102/0002831208319722

Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). A meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*, 445-476.

Review of Writing Packages reported to be used in schools¹

Package	Conceptual Category	Age	Keywords	Overview
Read Write Inc.	Comprehensive Literacy Scheme	KS1 & 2 (4-11 years)	Phonics, reading, comprehension, writing	Whole school programme to improve overall literacy attainment
THRASS	Comprehensive Literacy Scheme	KS2 (Low attainers years 3-8)	Handwriting, reading, teaching, spelling, listening	Whole school multi-sensory literacy programme teaching children about letters, speech sounds and spelling choices
ENABLE	Reading (phonics)	KS1+ (Years 2-4)	Increase confidence, phonics skills, reading	An intervention in small groups to improve overall attainment in literacy
A.R.R.O.W	Spelling (phonics)	KS1 & 2 (Low attainers years 1-6)	Listening, reading, comprehension,	Whole class intervention to improve auditory attention and thus increase progress in reading and spelling
Accelerwrite	Spelling (phonics)	KS1-4 (5-15 years)	Listening, memory, word processing	Individual intervention to improve literacy skills using a multi-sensory phonics programme
Alpha to Omega	Phonics	KS3 (11-14 years)	Teaching programme, oral language skills	A teaching programme based on structured, sequential phonetic and linguistic concepts
Cued Spelling	Spelling	KS1 & 2 (Years 2-6)	Spelling cues, syllables, collaborative learning	Whole class programme to support children in working with others (including parents) to improve spelling

¹ Listing of packages is not an endorsement of either the package/programme. Nor does it indicate that we have been able to find evidence to support its use.

Package	Conceptual Category	Age	Keywords	Overview
Big Writing	Writing Mechanics	KS1 & 2	Planning, revising, vocabulary, connectives, openers, punctuation	Whole class assessment aimed to raise standards in writing rapidly and effectively
Paired Writing	Writing Mechanics	KS1 & 2 (Reception to year 6)	Collaborative learning, stamina for writing	Small group activities aim to develop pupil confidence in writing, whilst also increasing stamina for writing
Rapid Writing	Writing Mechanics	KS2 - SEN and struggling writers	Writing progress	Small groups and independent work for struggling writers, aims to help close the gap in children's writing attainment
Summary Street	Writing Mechanics	USA 8th Grade	Individual narrative, summarising, reading, comprehension	A software tool which involves children working independently to improve their ability to summarise text
Write Away Together	Writing Mechanics	KS1 & 2 (Low attainers years 2-6)	Increase confidence, planning, writing	Small groups: Intervention which provides a framework for teachers to improve children's skills and confidence in writing
Using Drama	Writing Creative and Mechanics	<i>probably all ages - KS1-4</i>	Oral language, listening, reading, writing (narrative), vocabulary	Whole class intervention: various classroom activities involving the use of drama and theatre to improve literacy development
SOLO Writing Coach	Writing Creative and Mechanics	USA - Mid primary and secondary	Writing, scripted lessons, strategy instruction	Whole class intervention involving scripted lessons with the aim of achieving dramatic writing gains
Star Writer	Writing Creative and Mechanics	KS2 (years 3-6)	Speaking, listening, drama, comprehension, revision, planning	Interactive multimedia programme using shared and independent work to inspire and improve children's writing

Package	Conceptual Category	Age	Keywords	Overview
Talk for Writing	Writing Creative and Mechanics	KS1+ (Reception, years 2, 3 & 4)	Planning, revising, grammar	Whole class intervention involving talking about all aspects of writing to support children's development
Write from the start	Handwriting	Reception – KS1	Handwriting – motor skills	Developing fine motor and perceptual skills. Graded exercises and activities for hand-eye co-ordination, form constancy, spatial organisation and figure-ground discrimination.
Clicker 6	Computer programme which provides oral feedback and support for	Wide range of ages and learners	Aims to develop independence in reading and writing	Aims to help learners find and correct errors and by providing automatic speech feedback as pupils write.
Pie Corbett	Story and non fiction writing	Beginning writers to KS2	Ages 5 to 12	Based on talking for writing – systematic approach which builds in oral language at all stages of the writing process from planning, writing to reviewing