



# **Simonside Primary School**

## **English Curriculum Policy**

**Written December 2023**

## **Introduction**

This policy aims to set out our approach to teaching, monitoring and assessing English at Simonside Primary school. It will also detail how we ensure that our provision for the teaching of English as well as general literacy knowledge and skills is of a consistently high quality.

## **Intent**

At Simonside, we know that the acquisition of early English skills are imperative to all aspects of learning. Underpinned by our school ethos, as well as cultural capital as key curriculum driver, we believe that the development of fundamental English skills play a vital role for writing progression, vocabulary acquisition and reading development. We therefore, strive to deliver an ambitious English curriculum which meets the varied and progressive needs of all pupils across our school.

As a school, we aspire to provide children with essential English skills by consistently promoting ambitious standards of verbal and written English across a variety of contexts. High quality teaching and learning opportunities ensure that children are continually exposed to rich and diverse language conveyed through well thought out, concisely delivered lessons.

We aim to ensure that all pupils:

- Develop reading skills and strategies which enable them to read with fluency, accuracy and confidence.
- Develop positive attitudes towards books and reading, reading widely for pleasure and information – ‘learn to read, read to learn’.
- Develop a wide and varied vocabulary including subject specific tier vocabulary.

- Develop an appreciation of our rich and varied literacy heritage.
- Develop a secure understanding of grammar and grammar conventions.
- Develop clear, accurate and coherent writing skills.
- Develop the ability to adapt their written language and style for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.
- Develop in confidence to speak clearly to articulate their thoughts, ideas and understanding.
- Develop the ability to listen carefully as well as sensitively to others, including both their peers and adults in school.

## **Implementation**

The National Curriculum (2014) forms the basis of teaching and learning. Based upon the new curriculum for England, programmes of study for each year group have been developed. Teachers plan for different learning groups including whole class, small group, paired and individual. They then differentiate depending on pupil need. Teaching approaches are dynamic, flexible and responsive to learners. Teaching strategies are varied and receptive. They include:

- Discussing, explaining and analysing
- Modelling, demonstrating and scribing
- Using a range of question types to encourage curiosity, justification and clarification
- Instructing, directing and guiding
- Role play and use of props
- Drafting and re-drafting
- Evaluating and editing

At each Key Stage, a detailed programme of study sets out key teaching and learning. Lesson content is based on the new National Curriculum for England (2014).

The programmes of study for reading at Key Stages 1 and 2 consist of two dimensions:

- Word reading
- Comprehension (both listening and reading).

The programmes of study for writing at Key Stages 1 and 2 are constructed similarly to those of reading and also consist of two dimensions:

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and in writing).

Within the Early Years and Foundation Stage children will experience Communication and Language and Literacy as part of the seven areas of development laid out in Development Matters.

Sarah

## **Reading and Early Reading**

At Simonside Primary School, reading is at the heart of everything that we do. Encompassing the belief, 'learn to read, read to learn' cultural capital libraries form a central feature of our school. We know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for both reading and writing in all subjects. We therefore, endeavour to build a love of literature amongst pupils by exposing them to a wealth of different texts across a range of genres. We believe that all of our children can, and will, become fluent readers and writers.

### **Phonics**

We teach early reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. Throughout the Early Years and Key Stage One, children are taught the alphabetical code and practise this twice daily during shared phonic, reading and writing sessions.

As part of our phonics programme, pupils in Reception also begin to read words which are not phonetically plausible. These words are known as 'tricky words'. Children are taught to read tricky words on sight and they are practised alongside decodable words as part of phonics sessions. This continues into Year One and is consolidated in Year Two.

Keep-up phonics support sessions are timetabled for children from Reception to Year Two identified by class teachers as needing additional practise and support. Keep-up sessions follow a similar structure to that of whole class teaching, adopting the same procedures, resources and mantras but in smaller steps in

order to ensure additional repetition. Such sessions ensure that all children secure their knowledge and understanding of phonics and make good progress.

Class Teachers assess children's phonic knowledge each term. They then use assessment data to guide next steps in keep-up sessions. Keep-up sessions are also implemented in Key Stage Two for pupils who need additional support. Such sessions are timetabled to take place at least three times per week for approximately ten minutes each time.

## **Reading**

In addition to phonics sessions, early reading skills are also taught through guided reading sessions, which largely consist of 1:1 and sometimes 1:2 in the Early Years. Initially, children begin by sharing picture books with an adult then, as they develop in both skill and confidence they begin to apply their knowledge of CVC words (consonant vowel consonant) to written texts.

As children develop their reading skills they begin small group reading sessions. Children are matched with their peers who are working at a similar, if not exactly the same, reading stage as them. Together in small groups children read books matched to their secure phonic knowledge. The group leader (either a teacher or teaching assistant) guides the session 'tapping in' to individual children's reading at different points throughout the session.

In Key Stage One, group reading occurs three times weekly for 20 minutes. Children read with their class teacher or a teaching assistant from Key Stage One for 20 minutes on three days each week. In order to prevent cognitive overload of the children's working memory, each reading session has a clear focus:

Session 1: Decoding

Session 2: Prosody – teaching children to read with understanding and expression.

Session 3: Comprehension – teaching children to understand the text.

This approach ensures that crucial reading skills are continually targeted and practised which, in turn, allows good reading progress to be made. At the end of each reading session the group leader records assessment notes and provides verbal feedback to the class teacher. Reading group leaders rotate reading groups each week to allow for regular monitoring by the class teacher. Such practice also gives children the opportunity to read with different adults as well as their class teacher.

Alongside group reading, children in KS1 have frequent opportunities to read on a 1:1 basis with an adult. This continues in KS2 for targeted groups.

Group reading in KS2 is class based and the teaching approach varies from lower to upper Key Stage Two. All children are provided multiple opportunities to read often and widely across a range of text types. Vital reading skills are practised in isolation as well as collectively in both verbal and written contexts. This ensures that children are taught to be competent, confident readers.

### **Reading for Pleasure**

Reading for pleasure is strongly promoted at Simonside. Continually embedding the belief, 'learn to read, read to learn' reading for a range of purposes is held in very high regard. Each year group has a 'Canon of Works' which consists of core texts that are shared across a range of learning opportunities. This ensures

that children are regularly exposed to a range of both fiction and non-fiction text types across a range of genres and themes. Each year group's Canon of Works is a working document which is revised and updated throughout the year by class teachers. Texts from the Canon of Works also form part of the class library.

Each classroom has a class library which further promotes reading for pleasure. Libraries consist of age, and ability, appropriate fiction and non-fiction books. Children are encouraged to frequently use their class libraries, along with the two libraries we also have in school, to read for pleasure.

### **Home Reading**

Each child from Reception to Year Six takes home two reading books every Friday to share at home. The first book is a book which is closely matched to the child's reading ability. The intent of this is to practise taught skills and build reading confidence. Parents/carers are encouraged to comment on their child's reading in their reading journal before returning the book to school the following week. The second book is a book which the child has chosen from our school library to share with their parent/carer and read for pleasure.

In addition to this, all pupils in Key Stage One have a Little Wandle E-Book library login which allows them to access and read a wide variety of decodable reading practise books digitally. Pupils in Key Stage One have a Bug Club login which permits them to access a wealth of texts set at their current reading stage by their class teachers.



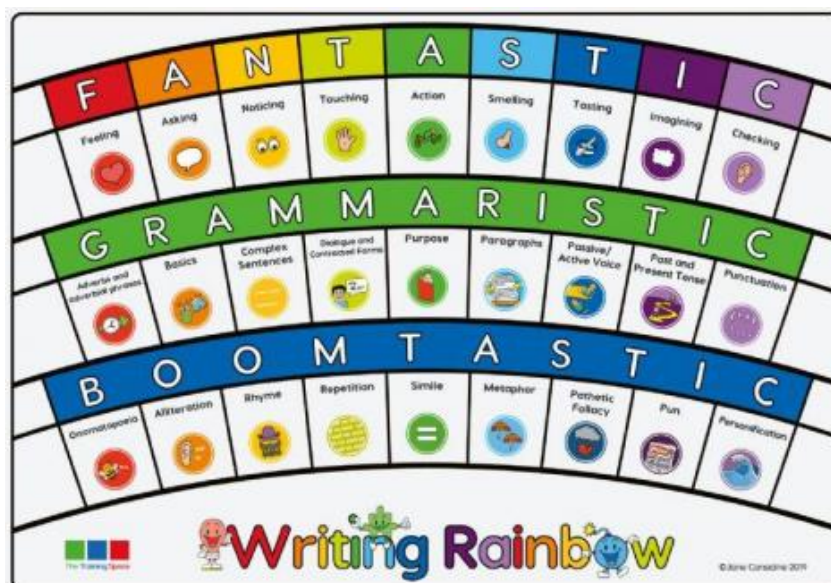
## Writing

The English curriculum is carefully mapped out across year groups in order to ensure breadth and depth of coverage across a range of writing genres as well as opportunities for children to practise their writing skills throughout the academic year. Spelling, vocabulary and grammar are embedded within our curriculum programmes of study.

Our primary approach to writing is based upon Jane Consodine's methods, taken from her book, 'The Write Stuff'. Proposed methods are used as a schema skilfully adapted and developed by class teachers to meet the varying and progressive needs of learners in their classes.

Within the Write Stuff there are three zones of writing consisting of multiple 'lenses' that children are taught to write through.

These are:



Writing lessons in Key Stage One and Key Stage Two are typically planned on a plot point basis using narrative, non-fiction and poetry maps. Following The Write Stuff principles, English lessons consist of a combination of 'experience' and 'sentence stacking lessons'. Teachers model writing of all genres and provide children with scaffolds to aid their sentence crafting. Writing scaffolds vary across genres, year groups and cohorts.

Pupils are taught to write across genres in a variety of forms with increasing understanding of audience and purpose as they progress through school.

At the end of each writing unit pupils practise writing through independent writing tasks. The intent of such is to assess pupils' independent application of skills taught and develop writing stamina.

From Key Stage One, pupils are taught to 'chot' – chat and jot. Such approach ensures that key language and vocabulary is embedded in the classroom culture. In addition to this, writing skills are further developed through 'Deepening the moment' which involves pupils using the FANTASTICs to add depth and further clarity to their writing. Pupils are taught to 'deepen the moment' through precise teaching of editing skills.

Key visuals from The Write Stuff's core principles are embedded in daily practise as well as general classroom routines. These are also displayed around teaching resources and used continually to support written as well as verbal sentence crafting.

In Early Years, children are introduced to the FANTASTICs.

Sarah

In addition to the teaching of age appropriate sentence crafting, all pupils from Year One are taught to write 'like a linguist'. Adopting this method, teachers skilfully teach pupils to craft 'Golden Sentences'. Such 'Golden Sentences' sentences, begin with a similar sentence stem but include a different age appropriate conjunction (co-ordinating or subordinating). Children are then challenged to accurately continue and complete this sentence stem. The intent of this is to recurrently expose pupils to subject specific tier vocabulary and in turn equip them with essential higher level writing skills. This method of sentence construction is practised across the curriculum specifically, in History, Geography and Science lessons.

### **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

At Simonside, we recognise that spelling punctuation and grammar (SPAG) are an essential part of both learning and communication. We therefore, embed the teaching of SPAG both discreetly and explicitly through our English writing curriculum. Knowledge of the correct grammar and punctuation is taught directly in line with our English writing curriculum and through speaking, reading and writing activities.

Spelling in the Early Years and Key Stage One is interweaved through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised. In Year Two, children continue their spelling journey with Little Wandle's 'bridge to spelling' and then subsequently, Little Wandle's spelling programme. This is then revised and built upon from Year Three.

From Year Two onwards, spelling is taught through spelling patterns and rules including the segmenting of syllables. SPAG is taught relevantly through explicit

sessions and then continually consolidated during daily writing lessons. This approach ensures that both the recognition and written application of vocabulary is 'taught, not caught'.

## **Spoken Language**

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing.

At Simonside, pupils are continually exposed to a language rich environment which is pivotal to their early language development. We know that it is imperative for pupils to develop confidence and skill in both verbal as well as written literacy. We therefore, strive to ensure that key, technical and advanced vocabulary is 'taught not caught' to our children from Early Years.

In line with statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across the 6 years of primary education, pupils at Simonside are taught to:

- listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers
- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- use relevant strategies to build their vocabulary
- articulate and justify answers, arguments, and opinions

- give well-structured descriptions, explanations, and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining, and exploring ideas
- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates
- gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others
- select and use appropriate registers for effective communication

## **Handwriting**

We uphold high expectations of handwriting and presentation for all pupils and aim for our children to leave in Year 6 with the ability to write using their own fluent style. At Simonside, we practise and teach the cursive script throughout school and use the Penpals handwriting scheme.

This ensures that:

- The importance of handwriting is upheld
- The progression of handwriting is consistent across school
- Children learn the correct posture and pencil grip for handwriting

- Children learn to write at an appropriate speed, for a range of purposes, whilst maintaining legibility

We recognise that handwriting as a skill develops at different rates for different pupils. Handwriting is therefore, taught steadily and practised frequently. Handwriting in the Early Years is taught initially by exposing pupils to range of multi-sensory activities. Following this, correct letter formation is taught, practised, and consolidated from Year One to Year Six. Throughout all year groups, pupils are taught to use a comfortable and correct pencil/pen grip.

We secure the development of handwriting throughout school through high quality teaching and intervention, where necessary. This ensures that handwriting skills are progressive across year groups and phases. Consistently good presentation of all written pieces is expected not only in handwriting lessons but across the curriculum.

See [Appendix 1](#) for handwriting progression across year groups and phases.

## **Impact**

Carefully planned lesson focuses ensure that all children have ongoing opportunities to apply their English knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Through both direct and discrete teaching of reading and writing, pupils continually revise and revisit learning to 'make it stick'.

## **Assessment**

Teachers formatively assess pupils on a lesson-to-lesson basis. They provide pupils with carefully devised verbal and written feedback and use this to direct next steps in learning. Summatively, teachers assess pupils using criteria set through BAD (Basic Advancing Deep) grids and track learning using a Depth of Learning Tracker. Data is then derived and analysed by teachers and school leaders. Depth of Learning trackers are updated by class teachers at least once per term.

In Early Years and Key Stage One, in addition to the Depth of Learning Tracker, Little Wandle assessment materials are used to assess, track and monitor pupils' phonic and spelling progression. This is done on an individual and small group basis half termly.

Reading and writing are moderated internally during phase and whole school moderation sessions. In addition to this, external moderation with other schools within the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) also takes place to ensure consistency.

## **End of Year Expectations**

At Simonside Primary School we have high aspirations for all pupils. We therefore, strive to ensure through quality first teaching and learning that our pupils make good progress from their initial starting points in line with National Curriculum expectations.

**In line with Early Learning Goals, as outlines in Development Matters, by the end of the Reception year, our aims is that children will be able to:**

- Listen attentively in a range of situations
- Listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions.
- Give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.
- Follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.
- Answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.
- Express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs.
- Use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future.
- Develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

During Year One teachers build on work from the Early Years Foundation Stage ensuring that pupils build on the phonic knowledge and skills that they have already learnt. This continues in Year Two when teachers continue to focus on establishing pupils' ability to read accurately at an appropriate pace and widely across different text types.

In writing, we aim for all pupils to begin Year Two with the ability to compose individual sentences orally and in writing. Pupils should be able to spell many tricky words accurately and apply their phonic knowledge to make phonically plausible attempts to spell words that they have not learnt. Individual letters should be formed correctly, ensuring that good handwriting habits are established.



**By the end of Key Stage One, most children will be able to:**

- Speak clearly, fluently and confidently to different audiences.
- Listen to, understand and respond appropriately to others.
- Work as a member of a group taking into account different views and negotiating roles.
- Participate in a range of drama activities.
- Read a variety of fiction and non-fictions.
- Use a variety of strategies in working out unfamiliar words when reading including phonic clues, contextual clues, syntax and grammar and reading on for meaning.
- Read with fluency, accuracy and expression.
- Work securely up to Phase 5 of Little Wandle Letters and Sounds and beyond.
- Know and understand the alphabetical system and be able to use simple dictionaries.
- Communicate in narrative and non-narrative forms and to write for a purpose.
- Use appropriate and interesting vocabulary.
- Develop and extend ideas in a sequence of sentence.
- Use capital letters, full stops and question marks.
- Use correct spelling for monosyllabic words.
- To recognise phonemes and graphemes and to use this knowledge when attempting words.
- Use accurately formed consistently sized handwriting that is joined

By the beginning of Year Three, we aim for pupils to be able to read books written at an age- appropriate interest level accurately decoding most new words outside of their spoken vocabulary. At this stage, pupils should also be developing their understanding and enjoyment of stories, poetry, plays and non-fiction books whilst learning to read silently.

When writing, we strive for pupils to be able to record their ideas with growing accuracy and good sentence punctuation. Teaching in Lower Key Stage Two will therefore, consolidate writing skills, vocabulary and overall sentence structure further cementing writing foundations ready for upper Key Stage Two.

In Upper Key Stage Two, we aim for pupils to be able to read aloud a wider range of books and poetry with accuracy at an appropriate speaking pace. At this stage, pupils should be reading broadly and frequently for pleasure and information, both inside and outside of school. We aim for our pupils to be able to read silently, with good understanding and the ability to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words as well as what they had read.

Within writing at this stage, it is expected the most pupils' grammar and punctuation is largely accurate. Pupils should be able to note down their ideas quickly and coherently spelling unfamiliar words with accuracy. Teachers work hard to ensure pupils' enjoyment and understanding of language is upheld and transferred into writing across the curriculum.

Teachers in Year Six prepare pupils for secondary education by ensuring that they have a broad range of language gained from stories, plays, poetry and non-fiction books as well as a firm understanding of sentence construction.

**By the end of Key Stage Two, most children will be able to:**

- Speak with confidence in a wide range of contexts, adapting their speech as appropriate.
- Listen attentively to, understand and respond appropriately to others identifying key features of language used for a specific purpose for example, to persuade or instruct.
- To work as a member of a group qualifying or justifying an opinion and to take up and sustain different roles.
- Participate in a wide range of drama activities.
- Read a range of more challenging and demanding reading material fluently, accurately and independently.
- Interpret meaning beyond the literal.
- To ask and answer questions about a text and express opinions, supporting a view by reference to the text.
- Use library skills to location books and reference skills for information.
- Use appropriate reading strategies when seeking information for example, the use of chapters, headings or skimming text.
- Write in a lively and thoughtful way in a range of forms.
- Sustain and develop ideas in an interesting way.
- Organise writing for purpose and to engage and sustain readers' interest.
- Use effective vocabulary, selecting words and precision to create a desired effect.
- Use increasingly complex, grammatically correct sentences to extend meaning.

- Organise sentences into paragraphs.
- Use increasing accurate spelling
- Use punctuation, including commas, apostrophes and inverted commas.
- Use fluent, legible handwriting, which is ideally joined.
- Speak aloud with confidence and intonation, debating topical issues within a public forum.
- Apply a sound grammatical knowledge to writing across the curriculum.
- Attempt more adventurous sentence structures and experiment with a wider range of punctuation.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the class teacher, Phase Leader, English subject leader, Head Teacher and full Governing Body to monitor the standards of children's work. The English subject leader and the leadership team monitor the quality of teaching in English. The English subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of English and informing staff of current developments within the subject.

Additionally, it is the role of the English subject leader to identify subject priorities and construct an action plan, which forms part of the School Development Plan. This action plan is then used as a basis for monitoring and will identify how such monitoring will be implemented. The English subject leader has allocated time for fulfilling the tasks required for subject monitoring and review.

### **The Role of the Subject Leader**

It is the responsibility of the English subject leader to:

- Ensure teachers understand the requirements of the National Curriculum (2014) and when needed supports them to plan lessons. The subject leader leads by setting high standards in their own teaching.
- Prepare, organise and lead CPD and joint professional development.
- Work with the SENCO to ensure that adequate provision is given to every pupil.
- Observe colleagues with the view of identifying the development they need.
- Work with ECTs to support and develop their practice through modelled lessons and team teaching.
- Attend relevant CPD provided by the LEA, teaching schools or other educational companies.
- Keep parents informed about English issues and updates.
- Liaise regularly with the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership team the progress of implementing the English National Curriculum.
- Work with Key Stage leaders to deploy support staff to address English related needs within the school.
- Monitor and evaluate English provision in the school by conducting work scrutiny, learning walks and assessment data analysis.
- Produce an annual Action Plan to improve provision of English in the school. This Action Plan is reviewed throughout the course of the year.

### **Parent/Community Involvement**

We value parent involvement in children's development of literacy and hold this in high regard. We strive to promote a home/school partnership in the following ways:

- Sharing information regarding subject updates and events within the school's calendar
- Sharing information regarding pupils' progress and learning
- English and reading PACT (parent and children together) events
- Homework
- Encouraging and monitoring home reading
- Students from the Royal Grammar School visit weekly to read with our pupils and develop their literacy skills.
- Welcoming CRB checked volunteers into the school to support children in reading and spelling.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the English subject leader, Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. At every review, the policy will be shared with the full governing body.

### **Links with other Policies**

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Curriculum Policy
- SEND policy
- Marking and feedback policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



### Early Years

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases

### Year 1

Pupils should be taught to:

- Sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly
- Begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place
- Form capital letters
- Form digits 0-9
- Understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these.

### Year 2

Pupils should be taught to:

- Form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another
- Start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- Write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters
- Use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters

### Years 3 and 4

Pupils should be taught to:

- Use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined
- Increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting [for example, by ensuring that the down strokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch].

Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.

### Years 5 and 6

Pupils should be taught to:

- Write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:
  - Choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters
  - Choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task

Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.