



LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS

[09/05/11]

LEARNING TO WRITE

(09/05/11)

I expect many mums got a Mother's Day card from their children yesterday! Having observed many in the making at school last Friday, I am sure the time taken by the children to draft, edit and refine their important messages, along with the colourful illustrations they included on their cards, has given a lot of enjoyment. Children love to write and share what they have written so it is always a pleasure to receive writings that have been thoughtfully crafted out and constructed with so much passion.

Parent visitors to the new entrant and early year classrooms will be able to observe teachers develop the children's writing abilities through a range of oral language activities centred on first hand and picture experiences. The children will be making attempts through pictorial expression seen in their lines, scribbles and drawing. Teachers will be acting as the scribe and modeling writing. There will be lots of experience charts, labels, books and displays highlighting words to help the children identify and use letters and words in their writing attempts. The children will be learning how to write high-frequency words, simple sentences through letter formations and words, and then connecting these words to make meaning. The teaching will be about developing expression and communication and much of the writing will relate to everyday and personal experiences and curriculum themes.

As the children progress through the school, teachers introduce them to a range of more complex writing experiences where the process development strategies strongly focus on writing independence. We expect the children will, among other things, be learning to use language in ways that are appropriate to different audiences and to different genres. Common genres expected in the middle and senior classes include writing to recall events, writing speeches, creative stories, descriptions, explanations, information writing, opinions and argument, writing letters, and reports and writing across a range of curriculum areas. Teachers use strategies such as brainstorming, webbing, conferencing and researching to support the processes as the children learn more about the conventions and features in the context of their own writing. Of importance is developing the child's ability to self-correct. By the end of the senior classes a further key objective is for the children to be able independently create writings, choosing effective content, language and text structures.

There is an expectation with our senior writers that the final version of a piece of writing is in the child's best handwriting or typed, and has no spelling errors. At Elmwood Normal we encourage teachers to accept approximate spelling during the draft writing process, with the expectation that correct spelling will feature in the finished published product. At this stage children should be confident and proficient at using a variety of media or software on a computer to present their quality writing. Presenting the final, polished, perhaps illustrated version of children's writing is what we call 'publishing'.

I urge you to review your children's writing and share in their enjoyment as they develop their knowledge and skills. Experiences like this will provide the strongest motivational force to encourage the young writer to write more.

Kevin Gooch
Principal