

Three Bridges Primary School



Writing workshop for parents
EYFS and Year 1

A decorative background on the left side of the page features a vertical red line. To its right are several colorful handprints: a purple one at the top left, a blue one in the middle left, an orange one at the bottom left, and a green one at the top right. A red spiral is in the top left, and a pink handprint is at the bottom right. There are also some red dots and a green ring-like shape.

Aims:

01

Explain how we teach writing at TBPS

02

Share ideas for supporting at home

03

Time in classrooms so your child can share some of their work with you

Why writing matters...

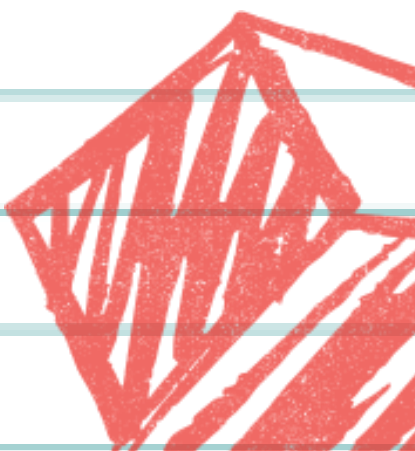


Writing is more than putting words on paper — it's how children express ideas, explain their thinking, and communicate with the world.



Strong writing skills help across all subjects, not just English.

Confidence in writing also boosts confidence in reading, speaking, and learning overall.



The facts...

- 18% of adults in England have very poor literacy skills.
- Adults with very poor literacy earn significantly less over their lifetime.
- Low literacy is linked with higher unemployment, lower confidence, and social isolation.

How we teach writing at TBPS...

EYFS – story dough and drawing club

Year 1 – drawing club



Year 2 – Year 6 – WRITER



What is Story Dough?

- Story Dough is an approach created by Greg Bottrill who is an author and Early years consultant.
- It uses playdough as a tool for sparking stories, characters, and adventures.
- The focus is not just on making models but on weaving stories, language, and imagination into the play.

How it works in the classroom...

- ▶ Children are given playdough as their "story material."
- ▶ They create characters, creatures, or objects.
- ▶ Teachers encourage children to talk about their creations:
 - Who are they?
 - Where do they live?
 - What might happen next?
- ▶ Stories grow naturally through play, drawing on children's own ideas.
Sometimes these stories are written down, acted out, or drawn — but the heart is always playful storytelling.



Why Story Dough is powerful...

- Builds language and vocabulary through storytelling.
- Encourages creativity and imagination in a playful, low-pressure way.
- Develops fine motor skills while children handle and shape the dough.
- Promotes confidence — every idea is valued, and there's no "wrong" way to play.
- Helps children see themselves as storytellers and creators.

How you can support at home ...

- Provide playdough or modelling clay for free play.
- Join in — ask questions like *"Who is that?"* or *"What happens next in their adventure?"*
- Celebrate their imagination rather than focusing on "realistic" models.
- Encourage drawing or writing about their creations if they want to.

What is Drawing Club?

- A daily English session created by Greg Bottrill
- Designed for Early Years and Key Stage 1
- Blends drawing, storytelling, and writing
- Sessions start with a shared story or stimulus

How it works in the classroom...

1. The teacher shares a story and this becomes the "world" for a week — full of characters, places and possibilities.
2. Children are given a chance to draw freely, inspired by the story world. They might draw characters, settings, or even invent new twists. Drawing is central: it makes the story world *theirs*.
3. The teacher introduces a few "secret words" (new vocabulary). These are woven into the play and drawings, so children *use them naturally*. For example: if the story is *The Three Little Pigs*, the secret words might be *sturdy, fragile, sneaky*.
4. Children use their drawings to inspire writing. This might start small (labels, speech bubbles) and grow into sentences or stories. *Because the ideas come from their imagination, writing feels exciting and purposeful.*

Why Drawing Club is powerful...

- Builds early writing skills
- Strengthens storytelling, imagination, and vocabulary
- Encourages children as authors and illustrators
- Boosts confidence through creativity
- Bridges spoken language and writing



How you can support at home...

- Ask open questions: 'Tell me about your picture'
- Celebrate all writing attempts
- Provide paper, pencils, and crayons
- Share stories and picture books together



Final thoughts...

- Story Dough and Drawing Club are about joy, creativity, and confidence
- Safe and inspiring space to explore language and writing
- With your support, children grow as storytellers and writers



