

**To: Headteachers of schools booked to take part in 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing**

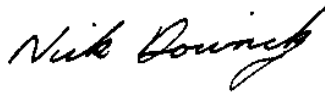
**SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR 1<sup>ST</sup>CLASS@WRITING TRAINING**

Welcome to 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing! Here is some information about the intervention and how to prepare for it before your Teaching Assistant and Link Teacher come to Day 1 of the training course. Please copy this for them.

1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing is an Every Child Counts programme developed by Edge Hill University. Your local Every Child Counts (ECC) provider or the school/organisation that has arranged to host the training will tell you about the dates and venue of the course. If you need any more information, please do not hesitate to contact them or the ECC Team at Edge Hill University.

I do hope that your staff and pupils enjoy and benefit from 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Dowrick, Director of Every Child Counts

**ABOUT 1<sup>ST</sup>CLASS@WRITING**

1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing is an intervention for pupils mainly in Years 3 to 5 who have fallen behind at writing. A trained teaching assistant helps them to make faster progress so that they can catch up with their peers. The teaching assistant is supported by a senior teacher within the school who acts as a Link Teacher.

It has two versions:

<b>The Pirate Writing Crew</b>	for pupils who need support to access Year 3 curriculum expectations
<b>Dragon Hunters</b>	for pupils who need support to access Year 4 curriculum expectations

Your training course will be for **ONE** of these versions, as arranged with your ECC provider or host. If you are unsure which one it will be, please check with them.

The teaching assistant delivers up to 72 stimulating and motivating 40 minute lessons to a group of up to 4 pupils, 4 times a week, in addition to their daily class lessons. The pupils develop a balanced range of writing skills in order to complete daily writing tasks bound up with the thematic adventure stories. It all comes 'ready-made' with detailed plans and comprehensive resources.

**What impact does it have?**

Over 3,000 pupils in Years 2 to 6 have been supported by 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing in 750 schools.

- 84% of pupils became **more confident and motivated** to write
- 71% **made more progress** than their teachers had expected
- their **spelling scores improved** by 74%



*I was amazed at the progress the children made both academically and emotionally. They became confident, happy learners who found writing less of a challenge and more of a joy!*

Sinead O'Brien, Inclusion Leader, St Theresa's Catholic Primary School, Barnet

*The sessions developed the key components of writing in a fun and engaging way. All the children were keen to contribute and they all made good progress.*

Claire Daly, Deputy Headteacher, The Raglan Schools, Enfield

## What training and support will we get?

**Training** is delivered by an ECC Trainer accredited by the University and includes:

- 3 days of training for teaching assistants over 2-3 months:
  - how 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing works
  - delivering it to pupils who struggle with writing
  - understanding the writing process
  - giving feedback and helping pupils to be independent writers
  - liaison with the pupils' class teachers
- the school's Link Teacher attends for 2 half days
- detailed handbook guidance and teaching resources



Teaching assistants will be ready to set up and deliver 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing straight after Day 1 of the training. Days 2 and 3 will include reviews of how they are getting on.

Schools also receive a **one-year ECC support package** including:

- online guidance and downloadable resources
- access to the ECC online data system, providing analyses of children's progress to help schools to evaluate and demonstrate the impact of 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing
- telephone and e-mail support
- an optional visit to the school by the Trainer (for a fee) to support the delivery, management and evaluation of 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing  
*if you want to arrange this, please contact your ECC provider/host or Edge Hill University*
- opportunities for Every Child Counts accreditation

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## THINGS TO DO BEFORE THE TRAINING BEGINS

### Identify a teaching assistant to be trained to implement 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing

A suitable teaching assistant will:

- have good levels of spelling, grammar and articulation
- be able to support the pupils in using standard English
- have successful experience of supporting pupils with writing
- have the secure phonic knowledge and skills required to support pupils with segmenting for spelling
- be able to engage fully in training sessions that include:
  - how to deliver 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing
  - the subject and pedagogic knowledge needed to teach writing
- be able to make independent decisions while teaching pupils, based on an understanding of their needs, supported by the Link Teacher.

## Identify a Link Teacher to attend part of the training and manage 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing

The Link Teacher will:

- provide the strategic leadership for the programme
- be suitably experienced to give support with the teaching of writing
- have time to support the teaching assistant and liaise with the class teacher(s), senior managers, SENCo, and other professionals as necessary
- attend two half-day training sessions with the teaching assistant.

We recommend that the Link Teacher is normally a senior member of staff. If the school prefers to nominate a class teacher who will liaise closely with the teaching assistant, then a senior manager can provide the leadership and additional support that will maximise the impact of the intervention.

### Set up a teaching area

1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing requires a teaching area away from the classroom where up to four pupils can sit around a table and listen carefully to their teacher and each other without distraction. They will need to engage in active and sometimes noisy activities without disturbing the work of the school.



## THINGS TO DO AFTER THE FIRST DAY OF TRAINING

Training Day 1 will include guidance on these steps. You may wish to prepare them beforehand.

### Choose the pupils to take part in 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing

1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing works best if the right pupils are chosen to take part in it. The context and content are ideally suited for pupils in Year 3 to 5 who have already had some success with the writing but who struggle to have ideas or communicate these effectively in writing. The pupils may:

- need support to access Year 3 (*Pirate Writing Crew*) or Year 4 (*Dragon Hunters*) national curriculum expectations
- have spelling and/or handwriting difficulties that create barriers to writing
- be later-stage learners of English as an additional language (1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing is not suitable for pupils who are beginning to learn English).

A group of four pupils should be chosen who can 'gel' and learn together. They should not normally take part in another intervention at the same time, to avoid overload.



## Prepare a timetable

This is a typical **example** of a teaching assistant's timetable that has worked well in school:

AN EXAMPLE OF A 3-WEEK TIMETABLE FOR A UNIT OF 1 <sup>ST</sup> CLASS@WRITING					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Teach session 1	Teach session 2	Teach session 3	Teach session 4	Preparation and familiarisation time
Week 2	Teach session 5	<i>Unscripted session* (optional)</i>	Teach session 6	Teach session 7	Preparation and familiarisation time
Week 3	Teach session 8	Teach session 9	Teach session 10	<i>Unscripted session* (optional)</i>	Preparation and familiarisation time

*\* as the intervention goes on, individual differences between the pupils will become apparent and some may need extra support to keep up with the group. It is helpful to schedule time on which one or two pupils can revisit sessions or activities. This would provide an excellent opportunity for individual oral feedback and is allowed for in this timetable.*

Each lesson takes 40 minutes to deliver. Please allow plenty of time for the teaching assistant to prepare for lessons, to deliver them and to talk with teachers, particularly in their training term. We suggest that the teaching assistant is timetabled for 1 hour a day and we have included two additional preparation sessions in the timetable.

There are 6 units including one optional unit, so this timetable would be repeated 6 times over up to 18 weeks.

## Make baseline assessments of the pupils

Initial assessments will help the teaching assistant and the Link Teacher to fine tune the intervention to pupils' needs and will provide a baseline for the school to measure pupils' progress by the end of the programme. The pupils' class teacher will be asked to assist by:

- selecting a sample of independent writing recently completed by each pupil in class
- assessing pupils' performance at entry tasks that the teaching assistant administers.

## Start teaching!

The teaching assistant should start to deliver 1<sup>st</sup>Class@Writing as soon as possible after Day 1. This will enable them to get the most out of the course.

