

To: Headteachers of schools booked to take part in 1stClass@Writing

INFORMATION FOR NEW 1STCLASS@WRITING SCHOOLS BEFORE THE TRAINING BEGINS

Welcome to 1stClass@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.

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 1stClass@Writing.

Yours sincerely,



Claire Warner, Head of Every Child Counts Literacy

ABOUT 1STCLASS@WRITING

1stClass@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.

Your training course will be for one of two versions, as arranged with your ECC Provider / host:

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

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?

300 low-attaining pupils in 70 schools were supported by 1stClass@Writing in 2014-15.

- 70% of pupils made more progress than their class teachers had predicted them to make
- 88% of pupils showed more interest and confidence in writing after 1stClass@Writing

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 1stClass@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

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 1stClass@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 1stClass@Writing
if you want to arrange this, please contact your ECC provider/host or Edge Hill University
- opportunities for Every Child Counts accreditation

THINGS TO DO BEFORE THE TRAINING BEGINS

Identify a teaching assistant to implement 1stClass@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
- be able to engage fully in training sessions that include:
 - how to deliver 1stClass@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 support the teaching assistant and manage 1stClass@Writing

We recommend that Link Teacher is the senior member of staff best placed to support the teaching assistant. The Link Teacher will:

- provide the strategic leadership for the programme
- be suitably experienced to give support with the teaching of composition and transcription
- 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.

Identify a teaching area

1stClass@Writing will require a teaching area away from the classroom where up to four pupils can sit around a table and listen and talk without distraction. They also need to be able to engage in active, fun and lively 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 1stClass@Writing

1stClass@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:

- are likely to have been assessed at level 1a or 2c at the end of KS1
- will be secure at phase 3 phonics (*Pirate Writing Crew*) or phase 5 phonics (*Dragon Hunters*)
- may have spelling and / or handwriting difficulties that create barriers to writing
- may be later-stage learners of English as an additional language (1stClass@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

After the first training day there will need to be time for everyone to meet to finalise which pupils are to be included and to draw up a timetable for the teaching assistant. The table below shows 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 st CLASS@WRITING					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Preparation and familiarisation time	Teach Session 1	Teach Session 2	Teach Session 3	Teach Session 4
Week 2	Unscripted session* (optional)	Teach Session 5	Teach Session 6	Teach Session 7	Teach Session 8
Week 3	Teach Session 9	Teach Session 10	Unscripted session* (optional)	Record keeping and preparation 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. There are 6 units including one optional unit, so this timetable would be repeated 6 times over up to 18 weeks.

The teaching assistant should be allocated additional time for preparation and planning to ensure he / she is well organised, confident and familiar with the resources, the writing and the activities.

An additional session for preparation has been included in the timetable. The teaching assistant will teach the best lessons if s/he is well organised and confident and familiar with the resources, writing and activities and if s/he has had appropriate planning and preparation time.

Make initial 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.