



Andrell Education

Raising Standards in Education

Dear Reader,

One of the improvement targets for this school is 'to further improve and develop writing'. In order to do this we have started a project called 'Big Write' and VCOP. You may have heard children talking about this.

'Big Write and VCOP' is a teaching approach created in 2004 by Ros Wilson in the United Kingdom and has been adapted to suit the Australian Curriculum by Samantha Taylor and Wendy Allder.

The program is a new teaching methodology for raising standards in writing rapidly and effectively. The method is based on fast, fun and lively teaching of the 'writing voice' through oral communication. It gives pupils confidence and the understanding to develop control of a higher level writing voice without requiring the understanding of technical knowledge of syntax and grammatical analysis. This is important as not all primary and early secondary aged children are ready for the level of technical knowledge and understanding required to access higher order language in this way.

Big Write

'Big Write' is a completely new approach to the teaching of the skills of writing. It is highly effective for pupils from Foundation all the way through to Secondary School, and has an immediate impact on writing standards.

The approach has also been found to be a huge motivator for boys, who are quickly found to become 'excited writers'. It is also highly successful for bilingual pupils, because of its clarity and structure.

'Teachers and pupils are all excited about Big Write.'



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Talk Homework

As part of the preparation for this session, which is known as 'Big Write', pupils will be given 'Talk Homework'. The idea of Big Write is *'that if the children can't say it, they can't write it.'*

We need to encourage the development of language and listening skills in order to develop children's writing ability. Talk Homework is an approach developed through Big Write that promotes the development of such conversations.

Your child will come home with a new topic most weeks, which may arrive home on different days depending on when Big Write is going to take place that week. This will inform you of the topic to discuss with your child in order to help them with the content of their writing the following day.



To help your child get the most out of their talk homework task, Ros Wilson suggests that we try to do the following:

- *Encourage as many family members as possible to be involved in Talk Homework, possibly around the meal table!*
- *Switch off the T.V.! Try to ensure this is dedicated talking and listening time.*
- *When giving your opinion, use the 'because' word to explain why you think that.*
- *Give the possible opinions of two contrasting family members who are not present for the talk, and use the 'because' word to explain why they may be different*
- *Ask others around the table to give their opinions and to use the 'because' word.*
- *Ask your child his / her opinion and ask them to use the 'because' word.*
- *Link the topic you are given to discuss back to something you remember from when you were a child and say why things may be different now. Project forward to how things may be different in the future.*
- *Don't write anything down! Not only are we improving oral language, but we are also improving memory links.*