

Welcome to our
Writing Workshop
for parents of
children in Year R

Purbrook Infant School: November 2015



Aims of our workshop session

We will give you a guided tour through many of the early stages of writing.

In the course of the tour we will look at how we are developing your child's writing here at Purbrook Infant School and how, by working in partnership, you can be a vital support in this development at home!



**How we all begin:
A familiar scenario for us all!**



From a very early age all children seem to enjoy exploring how to make marks.

It is instinctive – not modelled or taught!

How can we build on this early desire and enjoyment to enable our children to grow into keen and successful writers?



Developing confident and fluent speakers

We believe that the first step to support our children in becoming writers is to help them become fluent speakers.

Many children come to us having experienced up to 3 or 4 stories a day read to them from a very early age.

This means for some children they have enjoyed thousands of texts before they have even started school.

In and out of school we encourage all our children to develop their love of shared stories and information books so they may explore and repeat much of the language they hear!



Developing confident and fluent speakers

Through many speaking and listening activities we encourage our children to develop and use new language.

Remember: if a child cannot say it... they cannot write it down!

- At school and at home all children need to be exposed to a wide and varied vocabulary.
- They need to hear a variety of words and understand the meaning of words.



Quality talk and interaction

Here adults interact with your children through play based activities to encourage quality talk and support language development.

Our most confident speakers usually have this experience at home too!



The development of motor skills

Alongside speaking and listening activities, other activities are designed to help and improve motor skills (gross and fine).

Big and small movements are encouraged to develop and strengthen muscles in arms and fingers and continue to build on children's early fascination with making marks.



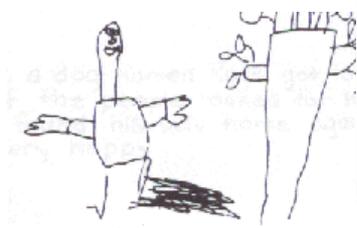
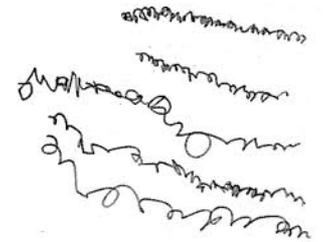
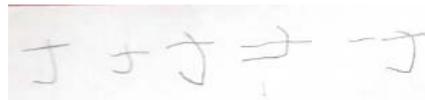
The Early Stages of Writing

Preliterate: Drawing & Scribbling

This stage takes many forms.

Children use drawings and scribbles. To begin with a child may not immediately distinguish between drawing and writing.

As they develop they will begin to show drawing and writing in different forms .



The Early Stages of Writing

Preliterate: *Drawing & Scribbling*

As children progress through this stage they begin to understand that drawing and writing is a purposeful means of communication.

However, some children quickly become aware and anxious that their writing looks very different from that of adults and older children .

Some children readily read their scribbles and marks as if they were writing but some do not!

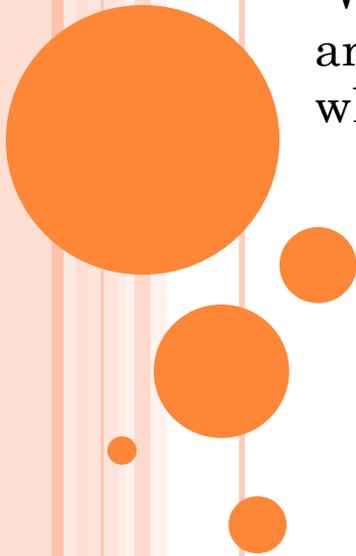
So how can we build on children's early enthusiasm and avoid creating anxiety, reluctance and fear in some?

The Early Stages of Writing: Our top tips for encouraging children – even the most reluctant!

- When children are engaged in early mark making and writing we put emphasis on asking if they found it fun first of all.
- We don't always insist on writing needing to have a meaning straightaway.
- We don't always write out every word a child has written in our own writing.
- However, we talk a lot about the special stage a child is at on their journey. We recognise that attempts at writing are not perfect but are part of the long journey we are all on to become better writers.

The Early Stages of Writing: Our top tips for encouraging children – even the most reluctant!

- We encourage children to work with others and alone to enjoy mark marking and early writing.
- We think about providing a wide range of mark making and writing tools so children can develop a real sense of which tools “feel” the best.



Taking a look at how writing develops

Emergent: *Random-letters or letter strings*

- uses letter sequences, perhaps learned from his/her name
- may write the same letters/shapes many times
- long strings of letters/shapes in random order

Emergent: *Letter-like forms*

- shapes in writing actually resemble letters
- shapes are not actually letters
- look like poorly formed letters, but are unique creations



b d c z o b t o b
w e s c o z m

I I A K Y L D I A B E U M
K B H L U U B L L H H m h r i

W O T O L
O W O V
O A O M
h r o A

C H P F D P E z d p 4
N C m c o z t o /

I W T O
P K

I went to the park

Transitional: *Writing via invented / phonetic spelling*

- one letter may represent an entire syllable or word
- may not use proper spacing



Opportunities for Writing

Indoors and Outdoors...Rain or Shine!!!

Opportunities for writing are available in all learning areas

- e.g. construction – make a label or sign for a model
 role play – write down a message, take an order or issue a speeding ticket!

Writing Areas : There is a writing area with a key challenge and various tools and resources are provided to support the children with this.

Writing Toolboxes and Bags: These encourage children to explore writing and mark- making through choice. Write anywhere!

Purposeful Writing: The focus may be ‘The Tiger who came to Tea’ so the children would write witness reports and shopping lists.

Children also take ownership of the areas e.g. labels for maths boxes, signs for role-play etc.

Letter Formation, Phonics & Handwriting

These are key aspects of writing development and are therefore taught directly by the teacher.

Phonics and letter formation:

Children need to develop a knowledge of the sounds and the letters which make each sound so that they are able to read and write.

Phonics is taught daily in Year R, for 15 minutes at a time. The sessions are short, sharp and focused on a particular sound and writing linked to that sound.

Why phonics?

Phonics has been highly prioritised by recent governments . It is a tool which children can use to help them to blend and segment words; so it is an important part of the process of learning to read, write and spell.

Children work within a phonics phase carefully tailored to their stage of development.

Here is a little more detail relating to the content of the earlier phonics phases.



PHASE 1

- Children develop their listening skills through increasing their awareness of sounds in the environment.
- They are taught to distinguish between different sounds made by instruments and other sound makers and develop a vocabulary to describe the sounds they hear.
- Children make sounds with different parts of their body and begin to copy and make patterns of sound e.g. copying simple actions in a song.
- Children are introduced to rhyming words and are encouraged to listen out for sounds at the beginning and ends of words. They make individual sounds and blend them orally to make words.



PHASE 2

- Children learn the alphabet rap
- They are taught 21 sounds including some double letters e.g. s, a, t, p, i, n, ll, ss, ff, which are linked to an action (Jolly Phonics)
- Children say the sound for the letter shape, learn an action and begin to recognise the letter shape or shapes that make the sound – Digraph Ditties
- Children are also taught to read and write ‘tricky’ words which don’t fit into phonic patterns e.g. the, was



PRONUNCIATION OF SOUNDS

- It is really important that children are taught and practise the 'pure' sound for each grapheme e.g. f, v, p, t
- If a sound is spoken incorrectly your child may spell a word incorrectly (pat – pu-a-tu)



PHASE 3

- Introduces the last letter shapes and sounds – v, w, x, y, z, zz, qu
- Introduces 1 spelling pattern (grapheme) for each sound (phoneme) in a word.
- Digraphs and trigraphs are introduced where 2 or more letters together make only 1 sound e.g. th, sh, ai, ee, igh. Children are taught ‘digraph ditties’ to help them remember
- Children are taught the names of letter shapes and to recognise capital letters
- Children use this learning to blend to read and segment to write



Handwriting

Handwriting:

Adults work with small focus groups on their handwriting. They are mindful to correct misconceptions/incorrect formation as and when necessary so that it does not become a bad habit! Please support your child at home with this. There is a motor skills warm up prior to this session with further motor skills development sessions for all those who need them.

Children in Year R follow programmes which support the development of muscle movements vital for writing. These often include activities on a large scale e.g. making large movements on big paper or wallpaper strips.



Pencil Targets

As your child progresses through Year R and through the school, good letter formation will be encouraged and rewarded through handwriting pencil awards. There are four levels of pencils, each with specific criteria. In order to achieve a pencil award, the children will have to demonstrate the necessary handwriting skills at least three times in their everyday work.

Level 1: The majority of letters are copied accurately using the correct formation.

Level 2: The majority of individual letters are formed and orientated correctly in cursive script, but not yet joined to each other from memory.

Level 3: Letters are formed and orientated correctly, and joined in cursive script. There may not yet be consistency in size and positioning.

Level 4: Children can write in fully cursive script with consistency in the size and shape of letters.

A recap on how writing is taught in Year R

All attempts at writing are recognised and valued – copies of some key pieces of **independent** work are captured and go in your child's learning journey.

Children use different mediums to explore writing through play:

Write Dance

Chalk / Pastels

Paint / Water

Interactive boards

Magic fingers on palm
backs / floor

Snow (shaving foam)

Lolly sticks on carpets

Whiteboards felt pens

Pencils, pens,

Glitter, rice, pasta, sand

Whole Class Input: All children receive a teacher led input based on a chosen focus (The Tiger Who came to Tea) e.g. shared writing of a letter to the tiger (Teacher scribes).

Class based independent activity: Opportunity to apply this knowledge by writing own letter to the tiger.

Various Activities around the unit are set up for children to explore:

Outdoor writing area (hunting for) – 't' words / "tiger" writing den

Indoor writing area (with a teacher) – speech bubbles for character

Construction – labels

Role play – take orders for dinner

Water – letters to make words

Writing bags – child initiated.



A recap on how to help your child at home...

Making the writing process easier and supporting your child to progress:



Talk - Make time to interact with your child in order to develop quality talk e.g. play with them, act out scenarios, model good quality speech and language, correct children's speech and discuss the talk homework.

Read - Read and share a wide range of books to help your child develop a love of reading. Learn to read teddy words by sight recognition.

Develop motor skills – Play ball and target games, threading, posting and mini-treasure hunt activities such as picking out grains of rice from a tray of sand to strengthen muscles.

Write - Encourage any form of writing and mark making. Take part in the writing challenge.

Spell – Encourage independence - 'have a go.' When confident in reading the sight words begin to teach children to spell the high frequency words on teddy cards.

Encourage - Praise and value effort. Identify what the child has done well or what you like about their writing.

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