

Purbrook



Infant School

Writing Policy

English Curriculum statement

At Purbrook Infant School we aim to provide children with the skills they need to function and achieve in life after education. These are reading, writing, speaking and listening and grammatical elements of English that are used every day. We also understand the importance of encouraging and nurturing a child's love of English, so that they enjoy their learning and continue to improve their literacy skills beyond their time at Purbrook Infant School. This means that we make English actively engaging for the pupils, with a real purpose and using stimuli and books in which we know the children have a genuine interest. To fully integrate SMSC into English lessons, we provide opportunities to explore global issues as real-life contexts, explore how people and places are represented and explore values, beliefs and experiences of different people and other ways of seeing and knowing, drawing on a range of texts. We also develop empathy, communication skills and the ability to discuss effectively.

Writing

All writing at Purbrook Infant School has a purpose. We believe this is fundamental in engaging the children and preparing them for life after school. A lot of writing begins as reading, learning from existing texts and seeing good examples. Pupils generate and share ideas with teacher guidance and intervention to help extend vocabulary choices and ensure appropriate structure and tone of the text. We try to make the writing process as enjoyable and productive as possible, creating a calm and relaxed environment to help pupils stay focussed. Pupils are given time to reflect upon their work, discuss it and then refine it to ensure it is the best it can be, both midway through their writing time and at the end. We celebrate good writing by adding it to displays and our classroom working walls.

Curriculum aims

The programmes of study for writing at EYFS and Key Stage 1 consist of two dimensions:

- transcription (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing).

It is essential that teaching and self-initiated learning develops pupils' competence in these two dimensions. In addition, pupils should be taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their writing. Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription: that is, on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the morphology (word structure) and orthography (spelling structure) of words. Effective composition involves forming, articulating and communicating ideas, and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy handwriting.

Oracy

Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing here at Purbrook Infant School. As a school we wholeheartedly believe high quality writing arises from a sea of talk and every opportunity has been provided for pupils to participate in discussion activities and develop new vocabulary daily. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. All teachers will therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils will develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write.

Spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Opportunities for teachers to enhance pupils' vocabulary should arise naturally through the reading and writing lessons. As pupils' vocabulary increases, teachers will show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. They should also teach pupils how to work out and clarify the meanings of unknown words and words with more than one meaning. Pupils should be

taught to control their speaking and writing consciously and to use standard English. They should be taught to use the elements of spelling, grammar, punctuation and how to use the language to describe language. This is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, but simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons. Throughout the themes and English stimuli, teachers should teach pupils the vocabulary they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language. It is important that pupils learn the correct grammatical terms in English and that these terms are integrated within teaching.

Planning and Progression

The writing curriculum is carefully planned alongside the aims of the National Curriculum guidance for Key Stage 1 with clear progression across year groups. Pupils in EYFS will be provided with every opportunity to engage in writing and talk around writing through the use of role play, small world scenarios, helicopter stories and frequent phonics sessions. The curriculum is planned to ensure that a wide range of literature from different cultures and heritages is explored and valued. Purbrook Infant School has worked hard to select high quality core texts and stimuli and to create writing sequences whereby pupils are provided with opportunities to write for real purposes and real audiences. Our pupils have opportunities to apply and showcase their writing skills across the whole curriculum areas through a wide range of activities such as Busy Bee Certificates and celebration assemblies. Together, we have designed the curriculum to best suit the needs of our pupils and to spark interest, challenge and curiosity, whilst allowing our children opportunities to revisit previous learning to embed future skills. We teach writing alongside a different core text or stimuli which is often linked to the History/Geography/Science theme being studied. At Purbrook Infant School the writing lessons are planned in accordance with the writing sequences created by our experienced members of staff which outline how learning should progress across a unit of learning as well as providing detailed plans for the day to day teaching of writing. The writing sequences ensure:

- There are high quality model texts for the children to deconstruct and analyse with their teacher. The model writes are based on the core text and focus on specific grammar aims obtained from the National Curriculum.
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught in the context of pupil's own writing, and where necessary through discrete lessons.
- Pupils have abundant opportunities for talk within writing lessons in order to engage and understand the core text thoroughly through a range of drama activities such as freeze frames, role play and small world opportunities.
- There are ample opportunities for teachers to model writing skills by teaching pupils how to create, improve and revise their writing through shared writing, whiteboard work and through the use of the working wall.
- Every opportunity is provided for pupils to become critical readers of their own writing by using self or peer-evaluation and by checking their work independently or alongside their teacher during live marking for sense, precision and meaning.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of vocabulary and varied word mats which the teacher will activate through their pithy and accurate teaching of writing.
- Pupils are taught to develop their ability to organise and present their writing. All teachers will adhere to the key principles of writing (Appendix 1). These writing principles will be adhered to by all members of staff when planning for writing opportunities across all subjects. It will be evidenced in planning and lessons across the school.

Spelling

Strategies for spelling are taught to enable pupils to become confident and competent spellers. The school follows the Purbrook Honeycomb Phonics Programme. This programme is in line with the National

Curriculum for spelling and phonological awareness. Pupils who are consistently underachieving in their phonics or remain in the bottom 20% for phonics will receive extra spelling and phonics support. Phonics and spellings will be monitored closely by the subject leader.

Handwriting

At Purbrook Infant School, handwriting will begin with mark-making and the first 8 pre writing shapes in EYFS. During this time, staff in EYFS will ensure pupils are given daily opportunities to build their core strength as this will help pupils with their writing. The needs of left handed pupils or those with physical difficulties are also taken into account and where necessary accommodated with resources or specific intervention such as a pencil grip or resources to increase core strength. Discrete handwriting lessons are planned into the timetable. Correct posture and positioning of paper or books are also emphasised during these sessions. Letter formation and handwriting is taught and modelled using a range of resources. (See *Handwriting policy*)

Variation

“What a child can do today with assistance, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow.” Lev S. Vygotsky
Purbrook Infant School aims to provide for all pupils so that they achieve as highly as they can in writing, according to their individual abilities and starting points. By means of on-going assessment, teachers can highlight a difficulty or identify which individuals or groups are under achieving and for what reason/s and will take steps to improve their attainment. Pupils who are identified as greater depth throughout all areas of the curriculum will also be identified and suitable challenges provided within daily teaching. SEND pupils have English based targets outlined in their Puffin Passports identified through their tracking toolkits. These are highlighted by the class teacher to show progression. Pupils, who are underperforming, will be part of the class teacher’s focus 20%. Pupils will also be provided with differentiated word mats and a range of scaffolds. Purbrook Infant School also adopt flexible grouping based on live marking in the lesson so gaps are identified and remodelling can take place to move learning on and accelerate progress.

Colourful semantics

Colourful semantics is an approach created by Alison Bryan. It is aimed at helping children to develop their grammar but it is rooted in the meaning of words (semantics). Colourful semantics reassembles sentences by cutting them up into their thematic roles and then colour codes them.

The approach has four key colour coded stages. There are further stages for adverbs, adjectives, conjunctions and negatives.

Who – Orange/ What doing – Yellow/ What – Green/ Where – Blue

The approach can be used with children with a range of Speech, Language and Communication Needs including:

- Specific Language Impairment
- Developmental Delay or Disorder
- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Down Syndrome
- Literacy difficulties

A range of colourful semantics activities will be used by teachers teaching support to support pupils who are unable to access the writing sequences.

Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- Pupils working at a greater depth
- Pupils with low prior attainment

- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEND can access the National Curriculum for writing, wherever possible. Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English and plan work accordingly. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all aspects of the lesson. A wide range of core texts have been selected to reflect a wide range of cultures as well as ensuring there is an equal number of female/male main characters. All pupils are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. Purbrook Infant School aims to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Class teachers will report pupil's writing targets and strengths to the parents through parents' evenings and termly reports sent out during the year on the progress made by their pupils. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own writing through discussion with the teacher and their peers using the success criteria which is shared at the beginning of each unit of writing. Pupils will have many opportunities to record their writing. An 'English Book' to record their English work in English lessons and Seesaw where pupils demonstrate their knowledge of writing through self-initiated learning choices incorporating the key teaching points that have been taught over the course of the writing sequence in previous sessions. They will also be used as a form of assessment which will be moderated by teachers internally and externally. Success criteria should be used to enable pupils and teachers to assess work against specific skills and set targets based on gaps in learning (see Assessment Policy). Children should be clear about what their next steps are and should be able to verbalise their learning to any adult. Where skills have clearly been met, this should be highlighted in yellow indicating to the child to use this more frequently in their work. For example, high level vocabulary, full stops, expanded noun phrases, interesting sentences which provoke emotions in the reader. Any skills that have not yet been met will be highlighted in pink and the pupil will be encouraged to practise, and later incorporate this skill into their future learning.

End of Key Stage assessment

All pupils will write at least one independent piece of writing every half term. This will be based on the writing style they have been learning as part of the teaching sequence and will link to the core text. This piece of writing will be assessed against the national curriculum standards by the teacher. Writing is likely to be independent if it:

- emerges from a text, topic, visit, or curriculum experience in which pupils have had opportunities to discuss and rehearse what is to be written about
- enables pupils to use their own ideas and provides them with an element of choice—for example, writing from the perspective of a character they have chosen themselves
- has been edited, if required, by the pupil without the support of the teacher, although this may be in response to self, peer, or group evaluation
- is produced by pupils who have, if required, sought out classroom resources, such as word maps/dictionaries or thesauruses, without being prompted to do so by the teacher

Writing is not independent if it has been:

- modelled or heavily scaffolded
- copied or paraphrased
- edited as a result of direct intervention by a teacher or other adult—for example, when the pupil has been directed to change specific words for greater impact, where incorrect or omitted punctuation

has been indicated, or when incorrectly spelt words have been identified by an adult for the pupil to correct

- produced with the support of electronic aids that automatically provide correct spelling, synonyms, punctuation, or predictive text
- supported by detailed success criteria that specifically direct pupils as to what to include, or where to include it, in their writing—such as directing them to include specific vocabulary, grammatical features, or punctuation.

Displays

At first, the working wall should serve to engage and hook the pupils into the core text writing stimulus they are studying. It should stand out and actively encourage children to ask questions pertaining to the stimulus being studied. Reading and writing are interwoven and thus one should expect to see elements of both used across the display boards dedicated to these subjects. As the theme progresses it is important that all staff understand the purpose of the working wall is to support children's independent writing. It evolves as a unit of work unfolds, and is not intended to be a tidy display of finished work. Well planned working walls should support independent working and learning. Working walls are an extra resource within classrooms, pupils should be encouraged to view it as such. Pupils should be able to refer to it for vocabulary, sentence starters or to refresh their mind on an activity that was previously carried out which will aid them with their writing.

Non-negotiables

All classrooms are expected to have a core stimulus display (working wall) that showcases the children's work. Every working wall should have the following:

- The title of the core stimulus/theme displayed clearly
- Key vocabulary from the stimulus with pictures and definitions
- Key questions
- Children's work (WAGOLL)
- WOW

(Further information can be found in the Display Policy).

Links with Other Subjects

Teachers should seek to take advantage of opportunities for writing to make cross-curricular links where relevant. Teachers should plan for pupils to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through writing lessons to other areas of the curriculum and ensure the consistency and quality of writing remains the same.

Roles and Responsibilities

The writing leader will give precedence to enhancements for the teaching and learning of writing across the school and add to the school improvement plan, in consultation with the Headteacher and Governing Body, driving forward the improvement of teaching writing and progress and achievement of learners. They will converse frequently with the Headteacher and the reading/phonics and language lead and the governors regarding the progress of executing the National Curriculum for writing in school. They will ensure that the school's senior leadership team and governors are kept up-to-date about the quality of teaching and learning in writing and the implementation of the writing sequences. They will work in close partnership with the school's senior leaders to ensure the learning needs of all pupils in writing are met effectively as well as analyse assessment data in order to plan whole school improvements in writing or specifically within a year group/phase. The subject leader will monitor pupil's progress and will monitor and evaluate writing provision in the school by conducting regular work scrutinies, learning walks, deep dives and pupil voices as well as analysing whole school moderations. They will then use this information to inform and where necessary update the subject development plan, which will detail how standards in

the subject are to be maintained and developed further. They will track the progress of identified groups of pupils. They will lead by example by setting high standards in their own teaching and raise the profile of writing at Purbrook Infant School through best practice. This will be done through the modelling of lessons, as suitable, to new staff, ECT's and peers to support continued professional development. They will monitor progression and continuity of English throughout the school through lesson observations and regular monitoring of outcomes of work in English books, and termly assessment, with a view to identifying the support they (teacher and/or student) need. They will ensure that all staff have access to the relevant resources they will require to teach a core stimulus as well as provide 'expertise' to assist staff in the delivery of the curriculum: ensures teachers understand the requirements of the National Curriculum and supports them to plan lessons. The subject leader will ensure that all staff have access to professional development including observations of best practice in the subject and through regularly preparing, organising, and leading insets and CPD activities to support staff in developing areas of writing where they feel less confident. They will work alongside the SENDCo to ensure the writing targets of SEND pupils are met. They will evaluate, on a regular basis, the policy and scheme of work to ensure they form the basis of practise of writing within the school. The subject leader will, on a regular basis, organise, audit and purchase whole school and class-based writing resources. They will read widely around pedagogy relating to the learning and teaching of English; takes responsibility for managing their own professional development by participating in external training, independent private study, engaging in educational research and scholarly reading. They will develop opportunities for parents/carers to become more involved in writing education; keeps parents informed about writing issues. They will ensure the high quality of writing displays (core text working walls) around the school. The subject leader will extend relationships and make contacts beyond the school.

Key Writing Principles

In all writing lessons there must be evidence of the following:

1. English lessons should include opportunities for the development of reading skills, grammar work, speaking and listening and writing. Units of learning should be based around high quality texts and or stimulus. Writing activities should be directly linked to these
2. The priority for every teacher is to maximise children's progress in writing, enabling them to reach the highest possible standard. Children get better at writing by being shown how to write, not simply by writing more frequently. Less tends to result in more!
3. So, before asking children to write teachers should ensure that they have participated in a range of high quality preparatory activities. They should not be asked to write too soon. Many of these activities will involve talk. Talk should be viewed as 'writing rehearsal'.
4. Teachers should write exemplar, model texts for children and these should be deconstructed in class, with the teacher offering guidance about the quality features within the exemplar. These model texts should embed the success criteria that are set for the piece of writing. Teachers should exemplify and highlight the success criteria within the model texts they produce.
5. There should be a strong focus on enabling children to compose quality sentences. This 'sentence level work' should offer them the chance to try out different sentence constructions and use specific phrases, or techniques. Children should be given the chance to create their sentences on whiteboards
6. Teachers should create word mats which must be 'activated' in the classroom through exemplification. Sentence level work should be a regular feature of classroom practice. These word mats should 'feed children with words and phrases' that they can use in their writing.
7. Teachers should make use of the three-part shared writing model to jointly construct texts with the class. As part of this the teacher should model to the children what writers do by externalising her thinking – offering a 'running commentary' on what she is doing, whilst she is doing it. Shared writing should be introduced after the deconstruction of a modelled exemplar
8. During the composition stage teachers should break up the time children write into chunks. The chunking process should be used to assess the possibility of the quality of children's writing deteriorating as they become fatigued. Children should not be asked to write for too long a period of time without the chance for evaluative review and receiving further teacher guidance. Writing can take place over more than one lesson.
9. Teachers should always look to introduce new, more sophisticated vocabulary to the children. Higher quality vocabulary should be written down when it is introduced, so children can see it as well as hear it.
10. Whenever teaching writing, the class teacher will share high quality examples of children's work (especially quality sentences) and ask pupils to discuss what the strengths of this writing are. Remember: it is always better if children can see this writing, as well as hear it
11. Frequent, short, focused handwriting sessions will ensure that no child is unable to achieve success as a writer as a result of experiencing significant difficulties with handwriting
12. Teachers should ensure that much of children's writing is 'heavily scaffolded', as outlined above. Some writing, especially towards the end of a term and the end of an academic year, should be independent. This writing will be 'lightly scaffolded' and meet the DfE requirements to be considered independent. It is this writing that teachers should use when making their assessment judgements about the standard children are performing at.