

Our English Curriculum at Purbrook Infant School

Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum requirements for English sit at the heart of Purbrook Infant Schools English curriculum. Over the three years that children are in the school, from Year R through to Year 2, they will be taught the appropriate statutory requirements in Language and communication, reading and writing. This includes the relevant handwriting, phonics, spelling, vocabulary and grammar elements in each year group. However, at Purbrook Infant School, we are determined that our English curriculum should be appropriate, relevant and engaging for our children; that it uses the interests, passions and motivations of both our staff and children to ensure that adults and children

alike are motivated to teach and to learn the skills, matters and processes that children are expected to have secured by the time they leave us at the end of their Early Years (Year R) and Key Stage 1 (Year 2). We build upon the children's prior learning throughout their time at Purbrook Infant School. We call this 'Buzzing back' and use their skills and knowledge as springboards to maintain and further develop an enthusiasm and love of learning through the English curriculum. Lessons and themes are linked and develop on one another: the skills that are taught and practised in one lesson are used and applied in subsequent lessons. Key elements of learning are returned to in subsequent



units of work and across subjects and year groups, enabling the children to revisit and embed their use, supporting their learning to become a part of their long-term memories. The following sections outline our key intentions and approaches within the various aspects of the English Curriculum.

Implementation

Learning Journeys

We know that children learn best when they can relate to, and are engaged by, their learning. With this in mind, children in Key Stage 1 are taught through the use of 'Learning Journeys'. Teachers plan journeys – a series of linked and related lessons lasting anywhere up to a number of weeks – which provide the children with a real and relevant context for their learning. The journeys are generally fixed,

they are planned by the teachers to include carefully selected aspects of the Language / vocabulary and communication, reading, grammar and writing expectations for their year group. The journey is shared with the children in a range of ways which lightly follows the HIAS structure of Stimulate and Generate, Capture, Sort and Sift and Apply and Evaluate. Each class also contains an English

Working Wall which sets out the stages of the learning journey and is used to capture key examples and elements through the stages of the learning. These are returned to throughout the journey and are used to support the children to use and apply the required skills with increasing independence.

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Implementation

Drawing Club

In Year R, the learning journey is fluid and, following a stimulus – a visitor, a story, the time of year, an unplanned event such as unexpected snow etc. – the learning opportunities and outcomes are predominantly led by the children’s interests and motivations and captured through a program called Drawing Club. Adults use this platform to engage children in independent and adult-led learning opportunities in order to enable them to achieve the next steps in their individual journeys

towards the relevant Early Learning Goals. Drawing Club inhabits the child’s love of books and stories, it allows the teacher to open up the magic world of tales and stories to children whilst at the same time enriches their language skills, develops their fine motor skills and allows teacher and children to share a really special time together. This learning approach to Literacy is one that immerses children into a world full of imagination where anything can happen and often does!

The progress children can make through Drawing Club across all areas of the curriculum is exceptional with the added bonus of confidence and joy. Developed with Early Years principles in mind, Drawing Club is a fantastic place to start a child’s experience of school ‘Literacy’. At Purbrook Infant School, the one thing that the world of story has to have is magic and Drawing Club is the golden key to open the door to it for children and go on an adventure with them.

In short Drawing Club:

Immerses children in the world of story and unearths their imaginations

Develops a wide range of skills across the whole curriculum in ‘one hit’

Gives the teacher the opportunity to gather evidence of progress that can be astonishing

Will develop children’s creative streaks as well as their ability to share ideas and skills

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Language and vocabulary

We believe that developing children's Language, vocabulary and listening skills is essential in enabling them to become effective communicators, both in spoken and written forms. We are firm believers that, in their earliest years, children learn best through play. With this in mind, we ensure that children in Year R are taught the skills that they need in speaking and listening in a wide range of, often, playful ways. These include drama and role-play opportunities, where children are encouraged to adopt familiar or imaginary roles and personas in their role-play, small world play, with puppets etc. These may be based on real-life experiences – the home, the vets, or the doctors, for example – or on characters, settings and events from a variety of nursery rhymes, traditional tales and stories. Alongside these approaches, children are supported to develop and use a wide range of vocabulary linked to their interests and learning through adults interacting and engaging with them in their play and modelling and extending their language appropriately.

In the subsequent years, learning journeys always contain sessions with a vocabulary focus, and where possible a speaking and listening experience. Children use these opportunities to consider their

own or others' feelings and responses to situations, developing vocabulary for later writing. We support children in their development through the use of our skilled staff and visitors where possible children are provided with 'first-hand' experiences which develop their language, understanding and responses to the topics that they are studying. For example, children in Year 1 experience the beauty and awe of space through the visiting planetarium when learning about Neil Armstrong and Space, whilst children in Year 2 are formally invited to the orchestra show when immersing themselves in the

Bear and The Piano Learning Journey.

Speaking can also be how they communicate at the end of their learning journey: presenting their thoughts, reasoning and responses to a specific audience. These can be anything from their classmates or members of staff to their parents or other visitors to the school. These opportunities build over the three years at Purbrook Infant School so that children can develop confidence in speaking aloud.

Across the school we have adopted the program 'Word Aware', this is a structured whole school approach to promote the vocabulary development of all children. It focuses on whole class learning, it is of particular value for those who start at a disadvantage – including children with Developmental Language Disorder, Special Educational Needs and those who speak English as an additional language, but it will extend the word learning of all children.



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Implementation

Honeycomb Phonics

Purbrook Infant School recognises that reading is one of the most important life skills that we can equip our children with. There are many important ways to develop children's reading fluency; reading to children, discussing and sharing books, telling and creating stories, looking at pictures and over-sharing familiar texts all have their place in developing children's love and understanding of reading. However, it is equally as important to develop a programme for teaching the literacy skills necessary to recognise individual letters and sounds in order to develop their reading and writing independence as they move through their school careers.

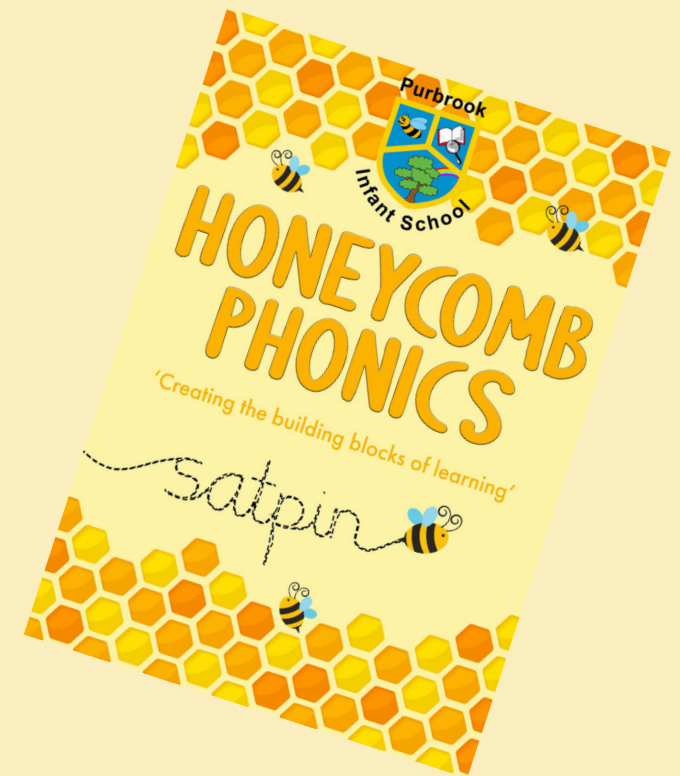
Our Honeycomb Phonics document details the Purbrook Infant School Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme which is compulsory for all staff to follow in order to support children to achieve our expected high standard of phonics achievement during their three years of education at our setting. It generally follows the Letters and Sounds format created by the DfE in 2007; however, some sections have been changed, adapted or enhanced based on evidence-based approaches used by teachers in our school with successfully positive impacts upon children's attainment and phonetic understanding.

Our document is broken down into the 6 Phases of

Letters and Sounds. Each phase is equally important as those before and after, and Phase 1 should run continually alongside the later phases to consolidate these important skills. Recap and consolidation opportunities should also be built in within the later phases to provide opportunities for children to 'keep up' with more complex grapheme-phoneme correspondences.

These phonics sessions should be taught alongside other discrete reading and writing opportunities, including vocabulary development, sharing, discussing and interpreting texts, spelling and grammar sessions, handwriting practice and literacy skills sessions. Opportunities for daily speech and language development should also be provided across all year groups.

Children who need additional support (the lowest 20%) should have additional phonics support provided to allow them to catch – and then keep – up with their peers. This will run alongside their usual phonics provision, not replace it.



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Impact

The impact on our children is clear: progress, sustained learning and transferrable skills. With the implementation of the writing journey being well established and taught thoroughly in both Early Years and Key stage 1, children are becoming resilient, more confident writers and by the time they leave us for the Junior school writing fluency is established, most genres of writing are familiar to them and they feel proud to showcase their work as well as that of others. Our English end of year assessments, are consistently in line or higher than the national average and our results place in phonics and our greater depth results place us in the top 20% schools nationally. We believe we develop a community of enthusiastic writers and communicators, equipped with the necessary English skills to DARE to learn.

