

## Subject Leader Report: English



*'Our Vision is for every child to love learning, be compassionate and achieve now and in the future. Working together with our communities, we will give our children roots to grow and wings to fly.'*

*At Portsdown Primary School, we believe that the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing are some of the most important skills a child needs, to ensure that they can achieve their potential in the future. We develop these skills through an integrated programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils are given opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught English skills within other subjects to ensure that their learning is embedded and to use these skills to learn about other curriculum areas.*

*The aim of English teaching and learning is that children:*

- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, using a range of independent strategies to self-monitor and correct*
  - read for enjoyment by developing fluency, word recognition and comprehension reading skills*
  - are interested in words, their meaning; develop a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms*
  - use basic skills, including spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar, and use these in all curriculum subjects*
  - use the powers of imagination and inventiveness along with critical awareness skills*
- Subject Organisation. In KS1 and KS2 the English curriculum is delivered following the guidance in the National curriculum in England: English programmes of study (DfE, 2013). Foundation Stage follow the guidance outlined in Development Matters (British Association for Early Childhood Education, 2012) which was produced with support from the Department for Education. Early Learning Goals ensure continuity and progression from Foundation Stage, preparing the children for Year 1 through to Year 6. Much of the teaching and learning in English centres around the use of high-quality texts. These have been carefully selected to offer children a wide range of authors to discuss and rich contexts from which to write from. The main themes that are revisited throughout these texts are:*
- Friendship*
  - Being an Outsider*
  - Our Relationship with Nature*
  - Conservation*
  - Migrancy The progression of texts studied provides children with opportunities to revisit these themes and build on prior learning.*

## Our Aims in Writing:

At Portsdown, we believe that all children can be successful and develop into confident writers. From Reception to Year 6, we ensure that the children practise the key skills of phonics, spelling and grammar through purposeful and engaging writing opportunities. We use great quality texts, real life experiences and the children's own interests to foster a love of writing

### Writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): the Nursery and Year R

Writing in the Nursery and Year R is a key part of the 'Literacy' area of the EYFS Curriculum (although there are also key links to the Communication and Language; Physical Development; and Expressive Arts and Design areas of the EYFS Curriculum). Within the provision at Portsdown Primary School and Early Years, the children will have opportunities to develop the gross motor and fine motor skills required to be able to write, exploring their mark-making and developing their print and letter knowledge in a range of activities and opportunities with the aim to be able to write letters and words (in simple phrases and sentences) by the end of Year R.

### Writing at Portsdown

We enable children to develop their writing skills by:

- teaching them to use, refine and improve their spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting as a means of communicating effectively helping them develop and use an increasingly wide vocabulary as appropriate for the purposes of their writing ensuring children know the purpose and audience of any piece of writing creating stimulating 'hooks' to produce high-quality writing giving children ample opportunities to plan, revise and evaluate their writing providing opportunities to motivate writing for pleasure Teaching Strategies The teaching of writing in the English is supported by the use of high quality texts which are used to create writing opportunities for the children. Children are taught through:
- well-planned, engaging lessons that model effective writing processes quality texts which are used as a stimulus for writing varied opportunities to write independently for a range of purposes classroom environments that assist and inspire the children looking at excellent examples of other children's writing supportive resources such as word mats and dictionaries Progression in Writing Key Stage 1 progress is characterised by:
  - writing with meaning clearly communicated
  - a developing vocabulary
  - an increasing knowledge of simple spelling conventions and accuracy in the punctuation of a sentence
  - the development of a comfortable, legible handwriting style Key Stage 2 progress is characterised by:
    - the ability to write appropriately for a widening range of purposes and audiences
    - coherent and grammatically correct sentences which are accurately punctuated and correctly spelt
    - the use of a widening and varied vocabulary
    - a developing understanding of how writing can be improved

- fluent, joined handwriting Cross-curricular Writing Opportunities Cross-curricular opportunities for writing are used across the curriculum as a means of practicing and embedding key skills and as a learning tool in other subjects. Teachers plan for pupils to practice and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through English lessons to other areas of the curriculum. Information Technology Children are given opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and software to communicate ideas and information in a variety of forms, incorporating texts, graphs, pictures and sound as appropriate. Assessment and Target Setting in English

## Planning and Teaching Assessment

The progress children make is assessed regularly to improve the quality of teaching and learning by:

- daily assessment during lessons to inform future planning; independent assessment activities to set personalised targets and inform future teaching
- marking and feedback to assess the children's abilities to achieve the learning objective, praising the work and suggesting areas to improve and extend skills encouraging children to assess their own and each other's work and suggest improvements
- summative tests in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6
- formal SATs tests at the end of Years 2 and 6
- Little Wandle Assessment every half term. The results of assessments are reported to parents in writing (summer term) and at parents' consultation meetings held in the autumn and spring terms. Progress is tracked to identify next steps in learning.

Pupils and/or groups of pupils who are under-achieving are identified and steps are taken to improve attainment:

- learning is broken down into achievable steps
- small group and one-to-one support is provided where needed
- advice sought from external agencies where appropriate
- adaptations are made to the physical environment where necessary
- provision of resources to meet individual needs Most able children are identified and suitable learning challenges are provided, directly linked to enrichment and extension activities, which:
- encourage meta-cognitive thinking within and between subjects
- develop confidence to make informed judgements about learning and methods to improve methods of communication Equal Opportunities All children are provided with equal access to the English curriculum. We provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability or home background. Parental Involvement Parent partnership is highly valued and there are many opportunities for parents to support the teaching and learning of English. Children need their parents' support with homework (reading, E Books, phonics and spelling) and the school encourages parental support through home visits, parents' meetings, parent workshops and home reading challenges.

## Planning and Teaching - Reading

### Reading at Portsdown

We enable children to develop reading skills by:

- Promoting a desire and confidence to read developing fluency in reading teaching a range of skills and strategies which will enable them to become critical, appreciative and reflective readers encouraging reading for pleasure as well as for a particular purpose developing the skill of reading as a writer teaching them to use the library effectively promoting a home/school partnership in the reading process Teaching Strategies Early Reading and phonics In FS and KS1, we teach children to use their phonics skills as the first strategy to use when they are reading. We follow the synthetic phonics programme 'Letters and Sounds' and our fully decodable reading books are matched to the progression of the Letters and Sounds scheme. Children are routinely assessed for their sound recognition, ability to blend these sounds together and their knowledge of 'tricky words' that cannot be sounded. Children in Year 1 also take the 'Phonics Check' which is a national assessment. Extra intervention and catch-up sessions are organised for any children who have or are in danger of, falling behind age expectations.
- Our aim for children's progression in phonics is: Year R - For most children to be secure in Phase 3 by the end of Year R Year 1 - For most children to secure Phase 5 by the phonics check in June Year 2 - For most children to secure Phase 6 and move onto the 'Support for Spelling' curriculum which teaches them about the spelling rules in the English language. There is additional information about Portsdown's approach to phonics in a separate appendix to this guidance. Additional development of the teaching of reading includes:
  - children are given support and guidance in their selection of books, ensuring that the chosen text is within their capabilities
  - children are introduced to a range of literature, contemporary, classic and from other cultures as well as their own, throughout both Key Stages
  - children have access to the school library to select books
  - children are encouraged to explore tastes and preferences in books while at the same time they are supported to widen the range and breadth of their reading choices
  - children practise being reflective readers by talking about their reading

- children regularly read to adults in school
- children take books home to read with parents to support comprehension skills and independent learning Progression in Reading. Key Stage 1 reading is taught through group Guided Reading sessions, where children read phonetically decodable books at a level that supports them make progress, phonics and through other opportunities throughout the day such as story time and individual reading.

Key Stage 1 progress is characterised by:

- Little Wandle Phonics assessments
- familiarity reading a growing number of words accurately and quickly
- using clues to check and confirm meaning Pupils' developing understanding is characterised by:
  - increasing awareness of the range and purposes of print
  - growing independence in choosing and reading books for themselves
  - growing competence and confidence in reading and understanding texts of gradually increasing complexity Pupils' developing response to text is characterised by:
    - choosing and reading books for pleasure
    - the growing ability to express preferences about what they have read

Key Stage 2 progress is seen in pupils' increasing independence as readers, their understanding and response to what they have read and their growing ability to find things out. Reading is taught through reading lessons such as Destination Reader (DR) sessions and as part of English lessons, through 'Whole Class Reading Sessions' where the class explores a text together, and through other opportunities throughout the day such as story time and individual reading. Pupils' understanding is characterised by:

- making inferences using information within a text, including predicting
- summarising the main points of a text
- using appropriate reading strategies and skills when seeking information
- explaining the meaning of new vocabulary
- confident use of information retrieval systems and libraries

Pupils' response to texts is characterised by:

- enthusiasm for reading; ability to express opinions about books
- supporting their views of a story, poem or non-fiction source by reference to a text
- discussing and understanding different ways in which a writer uses language to communicate ideas and achieve effect. Individual Reading All children will have at least one individual reading book either from the schools set of phonetically decodable books or the school library. All children will have the opportunity for quiet reading and/or reading to an adult on a daily basis with additional reading time for any children who are working below the expected standard for their age.

## Library

The School Library contains a variety Fiction and Non-Fiction books. All children are entitled to borrow at least one library book with their own library card. Once children have become 'free readers', they can borrow two books from the library. Each class has a weekly timetabled slot in the library where they can change their books.

Our Reading Champion gives out reading prizes in celebration assembly for classes and individuals who have been trying really hard with their reading.

Classroom Environment There are opportunities for pupils to experience print around them through classroom notices, labels and signs. These should take a variety of forms such as single words, handwritten font appropriate to their handwriting stage, phrases and complete sentences. All classrooms have a Book Corner, which allows children easy access to a range of interesting and appropriate books for their age as well as regular visits to the library.

### Phonics Lessons at Portsdown

Every phonics lesson follows the 4 part lesson as set out in Little Wandle.

#### Revisit and Review

Practice recognition and recall of previously taught letters.

Practice oral blending and segmentation.



#### Teach

Teach a new sound.

Teach blending or segmenting with letters.

Teach new tricky words.



#### Practice

Practice reading OR spelling with taught sounds.



#### Apply

Read or write captions using high frequency or decodable words.

## Speaking and Listening at Portsdown:

Spoken Language the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): the Nursery and Year R Spoken Language in the Nursery and Year R is a key part of the 'Communication and Language' area of the EYFS Curriculum. However, Communication and Language underpins the whole curriculum effectively, so elements of spoken language is evident in all areas of the EYFS provision. Within the provision at Portsdown Primary School and Early Years, the children will have a number of opportunities to listen to a range of stories, poems, rhymes, songs, music and other sounds and be supported to respond to these in different ways e.g. through dance or by retelling a story. The children in EYFS will be immersed in a vocabulary

rich environment where they will be supported to acquire new vocabulary and to be able to form simple sentences, improving upon their understanding of irregular tenses and plurals and enabling them to communicate their ideas to an increasingly wider audience. They will be supported to hold and initiate conversations, with increasing complexity of turn taking and will have opportunities to develop their abilities to pay attention to more than one thing at a time. They will also be provided with opportunities to improve their understanding of a question or a command where there may be more than one part to it e.g. "Get your coat and then stand by the door." Their understanding of 'why' questions will also be developed and they will develop the ability to ask their own simple questions.

Reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): the Nursery and Year R Reading in the Nursery and Year R is a key part of the 'Literacy' area of the EYFS Curriculum (although there are also key links to the Communication and Language; Expressive Arts and Design; and Understanding the World areas of the EYFS Curriculum). Within the provision at Portsdown Primary School and Early Years, the children in EYFS will be immersed in hearing high quality stories and non-fiction texts being shared with them and being supported to remember key sections of the texts, retelling (orally and through actions) and discussing their viewpoint on familiar stories and the characters in the texts. The children will be supported to understand the five key concepts about print: that it has meaning; print can have different purposes; we read from left to right and top to bottom (for English texts); the names of different parts of a book; and page sequencing. They will be supported to develop their phonological awareness so that they can spot and suggest rhymes, count syllables in words and recognise the same initial sound, such as mother and money, before being immersed in reading simple sentences and words with known letter-sound correspondences and, where necessary, a few exception words.

Writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): the Nursery and Year R Writing in the Nursery and Year R is a key part of the 'Literacy' area of the EYFS Curriculum (although there are also key links to the Communication and Language; Physical Development; and Expressive Arts and Design areas of the EYFS Curriculum). Within the provision at Portsdown Primary School and Early Years, the children will have opportunities to develop the gross motor and fine motor skills required to be able to write, exploring their mark-making and developing their print and letter knowledge in a range of activities and opportunities with the aim to be able to write letters and words (in simple phrases and sentences) by the end of Year R.

## **Monitoring the Quality of Teaching and Learning**

### **Targets for 2025-2026**

#### **Reading**

- To ensure a consistent approach to reading at KS2 continues (Destination Reader, fluency interventions) - ongoing
- Develop the use of technology to support progress in reading. - ongoing

#### **Writing**

- To raise attainment in writing by accelerating the progress of WTS writers (achieved for Year 6/ 85%) - ongoing for school
- Revise the English curriculum so that there are further opportunities to write in the wider curriculum - achieved/ caws/emus - but also ongoing

#### Assessment methods

- Pupil Interviewing as a method to improve target setting in writing - ongoing
- Develop the use of spoken sentence patterns across the school. - ongoing/ DC - Oracy
- Establish a 'Drawing Club' in EY to help improve writing outcomes - implemented - ongoing review

#### Key Targets & Strategic Priorities (2026–2027)

- **Personalised Spelling (Y3–Y6):** Monitor daily practice, dictation and Spelling Shed usage to ensure targeted words translate into independent writing.
- **SPAG Consistency:** Embed daily grammar starters and termly SPAG assessments to pinpoint gaps and drive writing accuracy across all key stages.
- **Early Reading & Home Engagement:** Increase home reading participation and deliver targeted daily 1:1 support for disadvantaged pupils, with a focus on closing the early literacy gap for disadvantaged children.
- **KS2 Reading Attainment:** Accelerate reading progress in Year 4 and Year 6 through daily Destination Reader and half-termly fluency tracking.
- **Early Writing Foundations:** Strengthen early mark-making and writing readiness across EYFS and Year 1 using Scribble Club and Drawing Club.
- **Adaptive Teaching in Writing:** Roll out the updated Writing Framework, using sentence stems, scaffolds and structured editing (SPLASH) to accelerate progress for pupils working towards expected standards.
- **Assessment & Pupil Voice:** Use termly Writing Assessment Grids, moderation PDMs and pupil interviewing so children can articulate and take ownership of their writing targets.