

The Children's Writing Journey at Portreath School

At Portreath Primary School, we believe that teaching children to understand the power of writing is an important part of our job. We believe that if we equip the children with the correct writing tools, they will be able to use them effectively to make a positive difference to their lives and to the world. Our main curriculum drivers are curiosity, creativity and courage. **Our motto is: Be curious, creative and courageous, to grow and make a difference.** Our writing curriculum plays a huge role in this.

When we read, we are **curious** about how the writer has written something so that we can try out similar words and techniques in our own writing. We are curious about how our choice of words and punctuation can impact the reader. We are curious about different genres and purposes of writing.

We want children to be **creative** when writing. To do this, we feel it is very important to master the skills of transcription in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting to free up their thoughts for creativity. Modelling writing is an important teaching tool. But we encourage the children to play with the model and make their work their own. We also ensure there are opportunities for 'free writes' where they choose what to write about. This is motivational for the children, and it is an opportunity to develop their own voice and style.

We expect everyone to be **courageous** when writing. To try new words, not be afraid of making mistakes, have a go, challenging themselves and using their writing to express themselves.

Two of the key tools we utilise are **books and people**. Story is powerful, so books form the building blocks of our curriculum. One of the best ways to become a great writer is to be an avid reader. The high-quality texts read and signposted, help the children develop a love of language and act as models and inspiration for their writing.

Our writing curriculum links to texts that we read and other subjects, to give writing purpose and opportunities for application. It is carefully mapped to ensure progression and coverage. We also believe that children need to have experiences to write about. As a school, we offer a rich broad curriculum to support this and offer lots of enrichment opportunities. From Year 1, children complete Grammarsaurus's 'Place Value of Punctuation and Grammar' units so that they can understand and play with the structure of language

We see reading and writing as a way to help people grow and blossom. We want our children to see the power the writing can have and that the written word can change the world.

Writing Rope

Writing is one of the 'golden threads' within our English curriculum. We use Sedita's Writing Rope as a way to breakdown the key elements that help make a great writer.



Writing Journey

We see learning to write as a journey. We feel there needs to be consistency across the school but also recognise that children at different stages of their education need slightly different things. Each class builds on previous learning. The school has created its own 'Progression in Writing and Genre guidance' document. This is followed by each class. Each class has its own curriculum map for each half term. This sets out the end of unit outcomes, the key resources, genre coverage and grammar and punctuation to be covered.

A range of genres is taught across the school, and this is captured in a long-term plan. The usual pattern for writing is to focus on a genre for a few weeks, with various pieces of writing and activities building up to a final piece. This is called a 'unit of work'. Most units follow a similar pattern.

Portreath's Typical Unit of Work structure:

1. Read a model text (WAGOLL) and when appropriate learn the text or part of it off by heart.
2. Analyse and identify key features
3. Create a 'checklist' of key features
4. Practise and explore different elements of the checklist
5. Explore, experiment, research, seek inspiration
6. Write an end piece
7. Redraft and write final version

Using Texts as a stimulus for Writing

The class readers (from the fiction and non-fiction spines) or picture books are often used as a basis for the writing. A range additional texts from a range of genres are shared with the class and staff's own models are used to inspire. Visual texts i.e. film clips are also used as a stimulus for writing. The teacher will usually share a model text at the start of the unit, this is referred to as a WAGOLL (What a Good One Looks Like).

Portreath's Structure for a Typical Writing Lesson:

1. Share WALT
2. Explain and teach any key concepts, skills or techniques for the lesson
3. Refer to WAGOLL if appropriate.
4. Teacher models writing and talks through their choices, this may contain some elements of shared writing where pupils contribute ideas too. There is a focus on the use of vocabulary, punctuation and grammar, as well as the text features.
5. Children have a go at writing themselves using the model text as a guide
6. Scaffolds such as word mats are in place for those who need it
7. Live marking and feedback takes place during the lesson
8. Use of 3-part plenary to share, celebrate and correct work using the ipad as a visualiser, with time for children to then correct their own work

Some lessons will focus more on generating ideas and involve things such as role play, some will be focus on editing and redrafting work. However, it is expected that children will be writing in most lessons.

Phonics

As we teach the children to read a phoneme, we also get them to write the phoneme. We use the Read Write Inc Program to provide the consistency. RWI is used across the school in YR and Y1/2 to deliver phonics and then in Y2-6 for spelling. Using phonic knowledge is the primary strategy to spell unknown words in the early years and then as spelling rules, exceptions and non-decodable (red and orange words) are taught these are expected to be applied in the children's writing.



Talk

We emphasise the importance of talk and discussion because children often generate and develop ideas through discussion. Many children benefit from oral rehearsal before writing. There are lots of opportunities for speaking woven into English lessons and into the wider curriculum.

Vocabulary

The acquisition of vocabulary is a key focus. The aim is for the children to be exposed to a range of words in a variety of ways and for them to then use these in their writing. Words are celebrated and we want all children to be logophiles. Vocabulary is discussed and key vocabulary is displayed and revisited. Both tier 2 vocabulary and 3 vocabulary are highlighted and taught. Rich powerful vocabulary is celebrated.

Handwriting

Having neat and fluent handwriting is important. Letter formation is a key focus as the phonemes are taught in EYFS. We use the RWI patter to support children with their letter formation in EYFS and KS1. As a school we use the 'Letter Join' scheme. We use a joined script with the following letters being looped: f g j k and y. In sessions incorrect formation is picked up on and corrected. There are regular discrete handwriting sessions. We are aware that for some children with additional needs their fine motor skills can prevent them achieving a neat fluent style. We provide support to develop their fine motor skills to help them improve their handwriting.

Children with Additional Needs

For those children who do not complete the RWI programme by the end of Y2 they will continue with phonics in Y3 and have intervention to support them to make accelerated progress. Once children are in Y4 they may continue to have phonic intervention if appropriate but other approaches are also explored such as using precision teaching to help them to spell. Children who are struggling with writing are given extra support and this may take the form of an intervention group. Support given for writing is identified on the SEND provision maps for children and if appropriate the child will have a specific target linked to writing. Some children receive additional support through a fine motor skills intervention or things such as Fun Fit style sessions to help their handwriting. We have resources such as pencil grips and sloping boards which are used as are necessary. To support children who display dyslexic tendencies we provide support by using resources such as coloured overlays if relevant to their visual needs and their English books may well have tinted paper.

Assessment

The children create an unaided piece of writing each half term which is kept in a special writing journey book/folder. These are often a good way to see progress at a glance and the children enjoy looking back to see how their writing has developed. The children are assessed against the Crofty End of Year statements and a point in time assessment is recorded on Sonar each term. These assessments are used to track pupil progress and attainment. These are analysed by the teacher and the English Subject Leader. The teachers work with teachers from at least 2 other schools to moderate writing assessments each year.