



Palfrey Junior School Curriculum Policy 2024

Intent

The children asked us about the school motto- 'Why Little Acorns to Mighty Oaks?'. This was our reply-

'As we grow we start small like an acorn, but then we grow to be big and strong like an oak tree.

What we learn in school is like this too- we start small, learning about ourselves, our Palfrey school and community, then our wider area such as Walsall and Birmingham, next England and the United Kingdom and finally the World! So the places and things we learn about grow and grow and spread out, just like an oak tree.

Whenever we learn something new in Maths or Literacy, we start small and our skills and knowledge grow stronger and stronger as we go along.'

The vision for the curriculum at Palfrey Junior School is to provide our children with the skills, knowledge, values and understanding that will equip them for their future lives. We want our school to be a place where they can nurture their talents and abilities. But we also want to foster in them a sense of belonging and connectedness, starting with school and home, radiating out to the local area, Britain and then the World. It is our intention to present to all children at our school through a rich, varied and engaging curriculum.

Implementation

- **Literacy** is taught in mixed ability class groups, using appropriate differentiation to either support or challenge children as they need it. Currently we use the Language and Literacy Scheme for daily literacy lessons, but individual strands are also supplemented in addition to this:

Speaking and listening: we are acutely aware that the vast majority of our pupils are EAL or New to English learners and that the ability to communicate effectively is vital. Therefore bridging units using drama, vocabulary work, speaking frames, sentence starters and partner talk are utilised across the entire curriculum. These give models and opportunities for our children to express their understanding, ideas, opinions and feelings in accurate and coherent ways.



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Reading: Guided reading sessions are held four times a week in order to directly teach the skills that our children require to be good readers. It is a mix of direct skills teaching, practice and application, and independent work. General skills such as vocabulary, question type, reading domains, retrieval and commenting on organisation, language and purpose are addressed. In addition to this, analysis has shown that our children have particular difficulties with context comprehension and inference and deduction, largely as a direct consequence of them being EAL learners. Therefore specific activities have been fed into the guided reading mix that directly address these issues. Children coming in new to Year 3 or new to school as midyear admissions are assessed and the Monster Phonics programme delivered as necessary. Books and activities chosen are age and stage appropriate. Due to the pandemic lockdowns, it may be that children from other years require a phonics boost too.

Reading at home is encouraged with the use of Bug Club, that is accessed through electronic devices and does not rely on parents purchasing large quantities of books or having to give detailed support, which their own language skills may preclude. This provides the children with ability appropriate progression in reading. In addition, books are taken home from the class book corner that may be more of a personal choice for the children and this is intended to promote reading for pleasure. The school is open each lunch time and we also have the Library on Wheels in each The school also has a visit from the mobile library once a week.

Reading a range of books and reading for pleasure is promoted by the use of special themed events and displays that are designed to inspire and excite the children. Through these they are encouraged to read different authors and genres than they might ordinarily choose, including modern and classic authors. Topic and Science book boxes are available for each year group, so that they can read a range of related fiction and non-fiction to the topics they are studying. These a can be used to enrich not only topic lessons, but also can be used in guided reading. Challenge boxes are also available in each class to stretch more able readers. Teachers also read the children a class story each day.

Writing is taught from a number of different angles. Although some measure of spelling and grammar is intrinsic within our scheme, we understand that our children, as EAL learners need increased provision. Therefore, short grammar and spelling lessons are taught four to five times a week in addition to work on organisation, purpose and effect. Colour My Grammar is used to support children's writing. The children have



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opportunities to apply these skills across the week in Big Writing (mostly related to literacy), Topic, Science and RE.

- **Maths** is taught for five a lessons a week using Abacus and a wide variety of fluency, application, reasoning and problem solving activities taken from a range of sources. Underpinning the curriculum is direct teaching of arithmetical skills and concepts. In addition to this, mathematical language is modelled so that children are able to apply their skills and knowledge in reasoning activities. Opportunities for included mathematical activities are identified in other areas of the curriculum such as Topic and Science.
- **Science** is taught twice a week using the Focus Education Learning Challenges. It ensures that we have coverage of the National Curriculum as well as a balance between scientific facts and enquiry. It begins with an engaging overarching question that is broken down into subsidiary learning challenges. These are designed to interest and inspire the children into considering how the world works. The science topics can be supported by WOW day, trips, and Inspire Workshops where parents are invited into school to work alongside their children.
- **Topic** is taught in a similar method to Science using Learning Challenges. It introduces children to the larger worlds though consideration of historical events that have shaped our society, ancient civilisations and cultures as well as the richness and beauty of the earth. However, it also has the scope for the planning to be adapted to meet our own context and reflect our own local interests. It has opportunities for National Curriculum History and Geography skills, knowledge and understanding to be taught, but also Art and DT. Topics can be started with WOW days , and supported by trips out, visitors into school and Inspire Workshops where parents are invited into school to work alongside their children.
- **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural** aspects of learning and **British Values** underpin all aspects of school life and the values of the school. All planning refers to this and our behaviour policy and school ethos reflect it. Votes for Schools is delivered every week and address a range of moral questions and current affairs for the children to discuss and vote on. Go Givers PHSE is used with children around three times a term to address specific issues such as keeping safe or friendship. We also participate in special themed events such as Anti-Bullying week, NSPCC Pants, and Mental Health poetry slams. Charity fundraising is also undertaken through the year for a variety of causes.



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- **Religious Education** is planned from the Locally Agreed Syllabus; parents have a right to withdraw their children from R.E. Where parents choose to exercise this right, the school will discuss with them alternative work for the pupil. Such arrangements should not require the school to deploy additional resources. The curriculum provided seeks to celebrate the diversity of different religions through a range of engaging activities for the children. Major festivals are reflected in special themed events and by visitors to school.
- **Computing** is given a discrete lesson each so that the National Curriculum is covered. ICT is also throughout the curriculum to support and enrich other aspects of learning. E-safety and responsible online behaviours are addressed and permeate all aspects of school life.
- **Music** is taught in all year groups via Charanga. Coverage is aligned to the New Model Music curriculum and includes listening and appraising; creating and exploring different types of music; and Singing and Performing, both vocal and with instruments. There is a school choir and we seek opportunities for music from outside the school such as the local music hub and Wolverhampton University. Music Masters is also used and it is where children are introduced to a wide range of music that is new to the children from different times and places. They then vote on their favourite to elect Palfrey's Music Master of the week.
- **French** is taught each week. The development of skills through speaking, listening, reading and writing, cultural understanding, grammar, spelling and language learning strategies. These key skills are identified in the National Curriculum for primary languages and are taught through a range of engaging activities.
- **PE** is taught through the Champions programme, which covers aspects of sport but also health and fitness. Sports coaches support teachers in the delivery of the subject and, where able, split classes so that those more able can have their performance stretched. Swimming is taught in Years 3, 4 and 5 and we are working towards the goal of children being able to swim 25m by the time they are in Year 6.
- **Sticky Knowledge** is the most crucial information from each history, geography, science and RE topics that we want to know and remember. It is highlighted in the children's books and is on display around the school. It is divided into strands so that the children can see the development of what they are learning from their prior knowledge and how it links to what they will be learning in the future.



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Extra –Curricular and Enrichment Activities

Many of our children do not participate in extracurricular or enrichment activities outside school. Evenings are largely taken up with Mosque instruction and at weekends most children are not involved in clubs, or teams. Enrichment activities such as visits to theatres, zoos or historical sites are not undertaken. Therefore, as a school we feel that it is vitally important that we give our children the opportunity to explore their talents and abilities and deepen their knowledge of the world.

After school there are clubs both at lunch time and after school for each year group that change throughout the year. This gives children access to a variety of extra curricular activities, so that all tastes and interests are catered for. The choir and drama groups have regular chances to perform in festivals and concerts, showcasing their achievements to the rest of the school, their parents and to the wider federation.

It is important that these clubs remain free so that financial constraints are no bar to children's participation. Each half term we try to ensure that as many children as possible get the chance to join in and over the year that as many children who wish to have had access to extra-curricular activities

WOW theme days, trips and visitors used to support the curriculum are important in filling the gap that the children have in their experience of life outside the immediate community. The school subsidise all such activities.

As a school we are also keen to enter the school into competitions and projects so that the children have an outlet for their ideas and creativity in different contexts. Good examples of this has been work with The Black Country Dance Hub, RIBA, The Commonwealth Games and Blue Peter Badge winners.

A range of outdoor activities and orienteering are being developed to utilise our new outdoor classroom and give our children the freedom to engage with their outside environment on a regular basis in order to further develop confidence, self-esteem and a growing knowledge of nature.



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Impact

The curriculum offered by Palfrey Junior School will promote:

- The highest standards of achievement by all pupils, regardless of ability, ethnic origin, gender or social background.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, preparing them for life as effective British and World citizens, able to contribute and respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of rapidly changing events.
- A broad and balanced curriculum, providing some solutions for our children's 'poverty of experience', whilst still retaining focus on skills and knowledge in the core areas of English and Mathematics.
- Perseverance and a strong work ethic- showing pride in their work and striving for more, to be aspirational for their future.
- Life skills and the ability to communicate well with a range of audiences, being able to make healthy choices, taking care of themselves mentally and physically, showing respect for others and appreciation of diversity.
- Curiosity – asking questions and finding answers, being willing to take risks, use resources and technologies effectively.
- Enjoyment of learning and discovery, both for now and the future.
- Opportunities to discover and nurture talents and abilities outside the curriculum in a variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities. The vast majority of these should be free to the pupils, so that families' financial constraints are no bar to their children's inclusion.



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- For the children to know more and remember more about the topics they study so that they have a window on the world and increase their cultural capital.

Assessment

Assessment and data is a key tool mapping the progress of our children and analysing their needs. This then informs teaching. However, we seek to create a balance. We strive only to use assessment which will be informative and does not compromise the delivery of the curriculum itself. Currently we use PiRA as a test for reading and PuMA as a test for maths.

Year 6 do prepare for SATs by analysis of gaps and needs and teaching to fill them, Mock SATs, question preparation and stamina building. However, this is balanced with access to a broader curriculum and they still take part in enrichment activities throughout the year. We feel that the children still have a right to a good curriculum as well as help in achieving the best test results possible to help them be ready for their secondary education.

Sticky Knowledge is assessed very informally with quizzes and games, both at the end of the topic and the end of the year in order to see how much has actually 'stuck' in the children's minds.

For more information, please see the Assessment policy.

Monitoring

The Heads of School and senior leaders have an ongoing monitoring schedule to ensure that curriculum standards are kept high. Quality Assurance activities such as planning trawls, work scrutinies and observations identify where good practice can be celebrated and shared, areas for development and, on occasions the need for larger reform of the curriculum or practice. From their monitoring activities, subject leaders then form ongoing action plans that feed into the main School Development Plan. They report their QA activities to the Heads of School regularly so that they are kept well informed of progress. Action plans are also required at appraisal meetings .

For more information please see individual subject action plans.

November 2024

To be reviewed in: November 2027 or sooner if changes occur.



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