



Springcroft Primary School

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS) and Handwriting Policy

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Our Mission Statement:
The place to learn, the place to succeed, the place to make friends,
the place to grow.

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“Grammar is ... the pole you grab to get your thoughts up on their feet and walking” Stephen King

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS) at Springcroft Primary School

Grammar, punctuation and spelling play an important part in spoken language, reading and writing. The purpose of grammar teaching is to enable pupils to become conscious of patterns of language which they can apply in their own work to enhance meaning. The purpose of punctuation is to clarify the meaning of texts. Readers use punctuation to help make sense of written texts, while writers use punctuation to help communicate intended meaning to the reader. Grammar and punctuation are taught as part of English, following the guidelines of the 2014 Primary Curriculum and the teaching overview for Vocabulary, Grammar and Punctuation.

Our Aims

We expect every teacher to be an aspirational outstanding teacher of GPS – no child deserves less.

The overarching aim for English in the national curriculum is to promote high standards of language and literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written language, and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment. In GPS, we aim to ensure that all pupils:

- are able to read and understand the punctuation and grammar within a written text
- acquire a wide vocabulary and can make rich connections across the curriculum
- have an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and the spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- use GPS accurately within their writing, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences

SPELLING

At Springcroft early spelling is taught using the Little Wandle phonics programme, where children develop their knowledge of phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (written letters). In Reception, children learn their phonics and ‘tricky’ words using Little Wandle.

Children in Year 1 follow the school’s phonics programme and practise spellings daily in their phonics sessions. Spellings, linked to the week, are sent home weekly to practise.

Children in Year 2 follow the school’s phonics programme, which utilises a specific spelling unit of work. Children are discretely taught spelling patterns and rules daily, and have weekly spellings sent home to learn. Children use spelling journals during spelling lessons.

From Y3 onwards Spelling is taught using the Babcock Spelling Scheme. Children are given spellings to learn at home for a weekly test. New spellings are given out and taught on a Monday and the test takes place on the following Monday. Spellings are taught discretely three times per week and the words taught need to follow a spelling rule. Alongside this, spellings are revisited daily in the daily Knowledge Retrieval activity in English. These spellings are current or previously taught spellings. Children use spelling journals during spelling lessons.

In KS2, the children will continue to learn phonics where necessary, and then will follow spelling rules in progression from the Babcock spelling scheme. Spelling practise should also include a dictation activity.

Dictionaries are available in all classrooms, alongside displays of Statutory spelling words and Spelling banks/mats are provided where necessary. Misspelt words, which they children should be able to spell, are highlighted in pink and children spell them correctly 3 times below their work.

PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR

The National Curriculum progression document (see Appendix 1) shows when concepts should first be introduced, but not necessarily when they should be completely understood. It is important to recognise that having been “exposed” to a concept, children may still not understand that concept by the end of the academic year. It is therefore paramount that content in earlier years be revisited in subsequent years to consolidate knowledge and build on pupils’ understanding. This should be carried out through Knowledge Retrieval activities and grammar lessons.

GPS lessons are progressive and planned thoroughly to ensure that the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum 2014 are met.

All Grammar and punctuation objectives for the year are taught through a text in English lessons in the Autumn term. Then each objective is revisited in the subsequent terms, allowing children to use the concepts in their writing from the beginning of the academic year.

GPS Non-negotiables

EYFS & KS1 Non-Negotiable Elements

- To teach all GPS objectives in the Autumn Term and then revisit the objectives over the year, except the EYFS where GPS is taught where appropriate across the academic year.
- To provide daily Knowledge Retrieval activities including GPS and Spelling practice.
- To teach discrete spelling lessons three times per week.
- Staff will model correct grammar to children in both their speech and writing.

KS2 Non-Negotiable Elements

- To teach all GPS objectives in the Autumn Term and then revisit the objectives over the year.
- To provide daily Knowledge Retrieval activities including GPS and Spelling practice.
- To give out spellings to learn at home for a weekly test each week.
- To teach discrete spelling lessons three times per week.
- To provide direct teaching and accurate modelling; to provide resources and an environment which promotes a developing understanding of grammar and punctuation;
- To observe pupils, monitor progress and determine targets for development;
- To ensure that shared writing gives opportunities for the pupils to focus on specific aspects of grammar and punctuation, while the group/independent sessions provide helpful contexts for application of grammatical knowledge in pupils’ own writing.

- English homework should occasionally focus on the GPS objectives covered in class.
- Staff will model correct grammar to children in both their speech and writing.
- An English Working Wall should show GPS terminology that is currently used.

HANDWRITING

Staff will model handwriting inline with this policy at all times (see appendix 4).

Reception:

Children in reception will be provided with a range of mark making and writing opportunities that are both adult supported and child initiated. The children will be encouraged to explore a variety of pencil grips through mark making opportunities using a variety of different media. The children will be supported to achieve an appropriate pencil grip for their level of development, leading to improved and accurate letter formation. Throughout the year, teachers and support staff will assess the children through observation and they will identify children who may need intervention for fine motor support.

Children will be encouraged to make marks and form letters on different writing formats for example, lines, plain paper and whiteboards. This is to consolidate and apply early writing skills. Most children will be forming letters correctly by the end of reception using different writing formats, for example on plain paper, whiteboards and lined paper. Regardless of which format they are writing on, positive handwriting habits will be recognised and celebrated.

Letter formation is taught during phonics lessons using Little Wandle's formation phrases and also as a discrete session each morning during the Autumn term.

During the spring term, handwriting lessons continue through a variety of mediums such as, whiteboards, pens, pencils, paper and other activities in provision that are closely monitored to ensure misconceptions are not practised and embedded.

During the summer term, more formal handwriting practise is introduced using Little Wandle materials, providing the essential knowledge and skills for transition to Year 1.

OFSTED's '[Research Review Series: English](#)' (2022), states: 'Children at the end of the EYFS should be able to hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases'.

Key Stage 1 (KS1) - Years 1 and 2:

Children in Year 1 will take part in more formal handwriting lessons using the appropriate materials for their stage of development.

Phonics planning is used to reinforce previously taught phonemes while practising the graphemes used.

Teachers model and support children to position themselves to be in a comfortable position for writing (see Appendix 2). 'Letter families' are used to support the teaching of letter formation, teachers and support staff might find it useful to group letters according to how they are formed. We will refer to these as letter families. However, teachers might decide to teach letter formation in a different order to the letter families. This is up to teacher discretion. Please find the 'letter families' (see Appendix 3).

Children in Year 2 will continue developing a legible and comfortable style of handwriting, continuing to work with the letter families to print script (see Appendix 4).

Handwriting practise is completed on handwriting sheets in KS1.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, all children should receive a minimum of three x 10-minute handwriting sessions per week. This is in addition to the daily grammar retrieval exercises which include weekly spellings which following our handwriting policy.

In Years 3, 4,5 and 6 children will be expected to use joined handwriting in all areas of the curriculum. Those children whose writing is neat and legible may be encouraged to use handwriting pens.

Handwriting practise is completed in the back of the yellow spelling journal in KS2.

If any child is not on track to reach these expectations, they will receive additional support through small intervention groups.

Appendix 1: National Curriculum Grammar progression.

Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation – Years 1 to 6

Year 1: Detail of content to be introduced (statutory requirement)	
Word	Regular plural noun suffixes <i>-s</i> or <i>-es</i> [for example, <i>dog, dogs; wish, wishes</i>], including the effects of these suffixes on the meaning of the noun Suffixes that can be added to verbs where no change is needed in the spelling of root words (e.g. <i>helping, helped, helper</i>) How the prefix <i>un-</i> changes the meaning of verbs and adjectives [negation, for example, <i>unkind, or undoing: untie the boaf</i>]
Sentence	How words can combine to make sentences Joining words and joining clauses using <i>and</i>
Text	Sequencing sentences to form short narratives
Punctuation	Separation of words with spaces Introduction to capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks to demarcate sentences Capital letters for names and for the personal pronoun <i>I</i>
Terminology for pupils	letter, capital letter word, singular, plural sentence punctuation, full stop, question mark, exclamation mark

Year 2: Detail of content to be introduced (statutory requirement)	
Word	Formation of nouns using suffixes such as <i>-ness, -er</i> and by compounding [for example, <i>whiteboard, superman</i>] Formation of adjectives using suffixes such as <i>-ful, -less</i> (A fuller list of suffixes can be found in the year 2 spelling section in English Appendix 1) Use of the suffixes <i>-er, -est</i> in adjectives and the use of <i>-ly</i> in Standard English to turn adjectives into adverbs
Sentence	Subordination (using <i>when, if, that, because</i>) and co-ordination (using <i>or, and, but</i>) Expanded noun phrases for description and specification [for example, <i>the blue butterfly, plain flour, the man in the moon</i>] How the grammatical patterns in a sentence indicate its function as a statement, question, exclamation or command

Year 3: Detail of content to be introduced (statutory requirement)

Terminology for pupils	<p>preposition, conjunction</p> <p>word family, prefix</p> <p>clause, subordinate clause</p> <p>direct speech</p> <p>consonant, consonant letter vowel, vowel letter</p> <p>inverted commas (or 'speech marks')</p>
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Year 4: Detail of content to be introduced (statutory requirement)

Word	<p>The grammatical difference between plural and possessive –s</p> <p>Standard English forms for verb inflections instead of local spoken forms [for example, <i>we were</i> instead of <i>we was</i>, or <i>I did</i> instead of <i>I done</i>]</p>
Sentence	<p>Noun phrases expanded by the addition of modifying adjectives, nouns and preposition phrases (e.g. <i>the teacher</i> expanded to: <i>the strict maths teacher with curly hair</i>)</p> <p>Fronted adverbials [for example, <i>Later that day, I heard the bad news.</i>]</p>
Text	<p>Use of paragraphs to organise ideas around a theme</p> <p>Appropriate choice of pronoun or noun within and across sentences to aid cohesion and avoid repetition</p>
Punctuation	<p>Use of inverted commas and other punctuation to indicate direct speech [for example, a comma after the reporting clause; end punctuation within inverted commas: <i>The conductor shouted, "Sit down!"</i>]</p> <p>Apostrophes to mark plural possession [for example, <i>the girl's name, the girls' names</i>]</p> <p>Use of commas after fronted adverbials</p>
Terminology for pupils	<p>determiner</p> <p>pronoun, possessive pronoun</p> <p>adverbial</p>

Year 5: Detail of content to be introduced (statutory requirement)	
Word	<p>Converting nouns or adjectives into verbs using suffixes [for example, <i>-ate; -ise; -ify</i>]</p> <p>Verb prefixes [for example, <i>dis-, de-, mis-, over- and re-</i>]</p>
Sentence	<p>Relative clauses beginning with <i>who, which, where, when, whose, that</i>, or an omitted relative pronoun</p> <p>Indicating degrees of possibility using adverbs [for example, <i>perhaps, surely</i>] or modal verbs [for example, <i>might, should, will, must</i>]</p>
Text	<p>Devices to build cohesion within a paragraph [for example, <i>then, after that, this, firstly</i>]</p> <p>Linking ideas across paragraphs using adverbials of time [for example, <i>later</i>], place [for example, <i>nearby</i>] and number [for example, <i>secondly</i>] or tense choices [for example, <i>he had seen her before</i>]</p>
Punctuation	<p>Brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis</p> <p>Use of commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity</p>
Terminology for pupils	<p>modal verb, relative pronoun</p> <p>relative clause</p> <p>parenthesis, bracket, dash</p> <p>cohesion, ambiguity</p>

Year 6: Detail of content to be introduced (statutory requirement)	
Word	<p>The difference between vocabulary typical of informal speech and vocabulary appropriate for formal speech and writing [for example, <i>find out – discover; ask for – request; go in – enter</i>]</p> <p>How words are related by meaning as synonyms and antonyms [for example, <i>big, large, little</i>].</p>
Sentence	<p>Use of the passive to affect the presentation of information in a sentence [for example, <i>I broke the window in the greenhouse</i> versus <i>The window in the greenhouse was broken (by me)</i>].</p> <p>The difference between structures typical of informal speech and structures appropriate for formal speech and writing [for example, the use of question tags: <i>He's your friend, isn't he?</i>, or the use of subjunctive forms such as <i>If I were</i> or <i>Were they to come</i> in some very formal writing and speech]</p>

Year 6: Detail of content to be introduced (statutory requirement)	
Text	<p>Linking ideas across paragraphs using a wider range of cohesive devices: repetition of a word or phrase, grammatical connections [for example, the use of adverbials such as <i>on the other hand</i>, <i>in contrast</i>, or <i>as a consequence</i>], and ellipsis</p> <p>Layout devices [for example, headings, sub-headings, columns, bullets, or tables, to structure text]</p>
Punctuation	<p>Use of the semi-colon, colon and dash to mark the boundary between independent clauses [for example, <i>It's raining; I'm fed up</i>]</p> <p>Use of the colon to introduce a list and use of semi-colons within lists</p> <p>Punctuation of bullet points to list information</p> <p>How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity [for example, <i>man eating shark</i> versus <i>man-eating shark</i>, or <i>recover</i> versus <i>re-cover</i>]</p>
Terminology for pupils	<p>subject, object</p> <p>active, passive</p> <p>synonym, antonym</p> <p>ellipsis, hyphen, colon, semi-colon, bullet points</p>

Appendix 2: Handwriting sitting position

SITTING POSITION

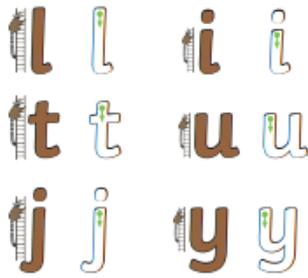


Appendix 3: Handwriting Letter families

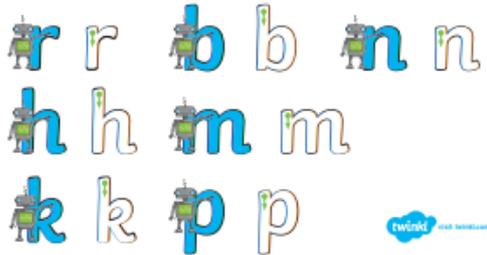
Curly Caterpillar Letters



Ladder Letters



One Armed Robot Letters



Zigzag Monster Letters



Appendix 4: KS2 Handwriting: Letter formation with joins

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

*b, p, q, x, and z are break letters

Appendix 5: Handwriting expectations

	Statutory Requirements	Non-Statutory Notes and Guidance
Year 1, Age 5–6	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sit correctly at a table, holding a pencil comfortably and correctly • begin to form lower-case letters in the correct direction, starting and finishing in the right place • learn unjoined handwriting before they start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters • form capital letters • form digits 0–9 • understand which letters belong to which handwriting ‘families’ (i.e. letters that are formed in similar ways) and to practise these. 	<p>Handwriting requires frequent and discrete, direct teaching. Pupils should be able to form letters correctly and confidently. The size of the writing implement (pencil, pen) should not be too large for a young pupil’s hand. Whatever is being used should allow the pupil to hold it easily and correctly so that bad habits are avoided.</p> <p>Writing is likely to develop at a slower pace than reading at this stage. This is because pupils need to encode the sounds they hear in words (spelling skills), develop the physical skill needed for handwriting, and learn how to organise their ideas in writing.</p> <p>Left-handed pupils should receive specific teaching to meet their needs.</p>
Year 2, Age 6–7	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • form lower-case letters of the correct size relative to one another • start using some of the diagonal and horizontal strokes needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined • write capital letters and digits of the correct size, orientation and relationship to one another and to lower case letters • use spacing between words that reflects the size of the letters. 	<p>Pupils should revise and practise correct letter formation frequently. They should be taught to write with a joined style as soon as they can form letters securely with the correct orientation.</p>
Years 3–4, Age 7–9	<p>Pupils should be taught to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the diagonal and horizontal strokes that are needed to join letters and understand which letters, when adjacent to one another, are best left un-joined • increase the legibility, consistency and quality of their handwriting (for example, by ensuring that the downstrokes of letters are parallel and equidistant; that lines of writing are spaced sufficiently so that the ascenders and descenders of letters do not touch). 	<p>Pupils should be using joined handwriting throughout their independent writing. Handwriting should continue to be taught, with the aim of increasing the fluency with which pupils are able to write down what they want to say. This, in turn, will support their composition and spelling.</p>
Years 5–6, Age 10–11	<p>Pupils should be taught to write legibly, fluently and with increasing speed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • choosing which shape of a letter to use when given choices and deciding whether or not to join specific letters • choosing the writing implement that is best suited for a task. 	<p>Pupils should continue to practise handwriting and be encouraged to increase the speed of it, so that problems with forming letters do not get in the way of their writing down what they want to say. They should be clear about what standard of handwriting is appropriate for a particular task, for example, quick notes or a final handwritten version. They should also be taught to use an un-joined style, for example, for labelling a diagram or data, writing an email address, or for algebra; and capital letters, for example, for filling in a form.</p>