

# English Policy

(formally known as Literacy)

*Education is the most powerful weapon which  
you can use to change the world'*

*Nelson Mandela*

## *Beormund's Principles*

The children who attend Beormund primary school have had differing, often negative, experiences within mainstream education. They come with general learning difficulties, gaps in their learning as well as experiencing severe social, emotional and mental health issues. The acquisition of language and the development of their reading and writing skills are fundamental to their access to other areas of the curriculum and synonymous with their abilities and capabilities to progress as lifelong learners. Our literacy policy will ensure that all pupils become confident communicators, verbally and as readers and writers, preparing them for their lives into adulthood.

## *Teaching of Reading and Writing Skills*

Planning is driven by the content of the new English National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 & 2

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study>

This statutory guidance states the national expectations for year groups in relation to their:

- Spoken Language,
- Reading - word reading
- Reading - comprehension (both listening and reading)
- Writing - transcription (encompassing both spelling handwriting/presentation)
- Writing - composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)
- Writing - vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

There are two statutory appendices - on spelling

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/239784/English\\_Appendix\\_1\\_-\\_Spelling.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239784/English_Appendix_1_-_Spelling.pdf) and on vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/335190/English\\_Appendix\\_2\\_-\\_Vocabulary\\_grammar\\_and\\_punctuation.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335190/English_Appendix_2_-_Vocabulary_grammar_and_punctuation.pdf) - they both give an overview of the specific features that should be included in teaching the programmes of study.

## *The Department for Education Aims:*

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. The national curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils:

- read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information
- acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language
- appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate

There are various reading and writing skills that need to be taught explicitly and then opportunities are given for children to apply these skills in meaningful contexts. Spelling, grammar and punctuation can be taught in creative ways during Basics. Links to Enrichment trips as well as the current IPC topic will help to provide a purpose for writing. Therapeutic storywriting should also be established within each class and taught regularly to engage children writing in the metaphor and having the freedom to be expressive on paper whilst developing their emotional literacy too. Teachers should always be mindful of the individuals in the class and their differing learning needs. The children's Literacy books should illustrate a personalised approach as well as encompassing and experiencing the different learning styles:

- Children with a strong visual preference for learning like pictures, graphs, charts, diagrams, maps and plans
- Children with a preference for aural (auditory) learning like discussions, stories, music, guest speakers, chat...
- Children with a strong read and write preference for learning like lists, notes and text in all its formats, whether in print or online
- Children with a kinaesthetic preference to learning enjoy tactile activities, using their senses, trial and error.

Personalised learning is at the heart of our Literacy learning. At Beormund we aim to provide equal access to the curriculum regardless of age, disability, gender, race/ethnicity, religion and belief, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background.

"The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum - cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write."

Teachers must refer to the new curriculum document relating to Spoken Language.

## *Reading for meaning, reading for enjoyment*

For the children to succeed at school we must encourage them to read for purpose and fun. Immersing the children in books, surrounding them with inspiring words to develop their extensive vocabulary and

changing the boy's attitudes to reading is paramount. Please refer to the school's *Reading for Pleasure Policy*.

The promotion of reading at Beormund is addressed through:

- Whole class storytimes - and/or a class book
- Shared reading using multiple copies or the interactive wipeboard.
- During Basics children given opportunities to read 1:1 and discuss the text.
- Independent reading time allocated after lunch. Designated time to show importance of reading.
- Personalised reading journey for children using the Project X scheme.
- Use of iPads - personalised allocation of books through BugClub as well as appropriate APPS
- Reading stories in assemblies.
- Weekly subscription of First News - a children's newspaper delivered to each class with interactive SmartBoard resources and Basic tasks related to each edition.
- Peer reading - including between different classes
- Allocated times to the school library and/or timetabled visits to the local library on Borough High Street
- Whole school celebrations such as World Book Day
- Volunteer readers to listen to, read with/to children and discuss the text.
- Drama projects where sessions are based upon a text looking at characterisation, story structure etc.

For many children the aspect of reading aloud to adults in class is daunting. As a strategy this does require children to expose their mistakes as peers can overhear them reading. Staff must be aware of this and use different strategies to suit individuals as well as the use of various breakout rooms around the school.

## *Writing*

Writing will always remain a focus for our school as we strive to encourage the boys to see themselves as writers. Inspiring and innovative planning sequences will expose the children to different genres throughout the year. Enrichment trips should provide the necessary context for the different writing purposes and styles and the use of an English working wall in class will ensure a visual aid for the children in determining a process of drafting and editing written work.

Therapeutic storywriting is now an integral part of English here at Beormund. It is essential for new teachers to observe, team teach and then effectively lead on the sessions themselves in their own classes. The approach allows children to explore, recognise and develop their emotional literacy as they recount events from the day and verbalise how they felt at different stages of that day. After defining a feeling, children then collectively brainstorm ideas for the character before having a quiet, independent writing opportunity to scribe their own work. ICT packages such as Clicker can also be used here and in other English lessons to encourage children to write.

## *Phonics and Spelling*

Staff should implement and consistently use the effective systematic Sounds Write phonics programme, The aim is to tailor those and other resources resources, to develop a high quality personalised programme for each child. This may be taught individually during Basics sessions and/or as a regular whole class lesson- with use of the computer programmes readily available to the children too.

"Most people read words more accurately than they spell them. The younger pupils are, the truer this is". As a result huge emphasis has been placed on spelling in the new curriculum and with the introduction of the SPAG test (Spelling and Grammar) this will form a focus for us here at Beormund.

## *Handwriting*

It needs to be recognised that as children arrive from various settings, they arrive with differing experiences of different handwriting schemes. Our main goal at Beormund is for the children to develop their own joined, legible and cursive style and to emphasise the need for this in all of their books - not just the handwriting task during Basics.

Where possible children's handwriting should be linked to the phonic or spelling word lists that they are currently learning. Often children find the practising, repetitive element quite relaxing and safe. Children will always benefit from developing their motor memory to help with their letter formation.

## *Assessment in English*

The success a child feels at school is linked closely to their self esteem. As a team we celebrate small steps and build confidence in the learner. English work is assessed in accordance with the school's overall *Assessment without Levels Policy* - please reference this document. Regular AfL (Assessment for Learning) drives the weekly planning and children are given either verbal or written feedback daily to move the children forward.

After listening to a child read, an adult will record observations on the personalised Guided Reading sheet. At the moment teachers are asked to highlight, annotate and track the children's reading development using the most current STAR proformas

Children will be involved with the setting of their termly reading targets as part of their Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs). Tasks related to these will be set during Basics.

Historically there has been a shift from levelling a child's piece of writing to the recognition of levelling the child as a writer. At Beormund, in accordance with our Editing Code, we note if children have completed work independently (I) or with support (WS). It is with the independent writing that teachers will highlight and note relevant age related expectations using the STAR documents. Teachers meet as a staff team regularly throughout the year to moderate their teacher assessments of children's recent writing. The use of the Pedagog table top targets will aid the children and adults in addressing next steps and these targets are also recorded on their PLPs.

Therapeutic story writing is a successful approach aimed at developing the children's perception of themselves as writers. There are no Learning Objectives shared, no success criteria given, no marking (but there is editing) and the emphasis is on being autonomous and having the freedom to write about what they want around the context of a feeling. The content of their independent work can also be used to make a Teacher Assessment of the child's writing.

When charting children's progress in English we will refer and report against the age related expectations.