

Beech Hill School

Writing

Policy



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Date: September 2020

Review Date: September 2021

## Intent

At Beech Hill School, we believe children should be given the fundamental skills they need to read and write fluently, independently and with confidence. A sound understanding of the English language underpins the whole curriculum and a high expectation of writing applies across all subjects.

In English lessons, children are exposed to inspiring and challenging texts that provide excellent writing opportunities. We want children to love the texts we share as these can only inspire a love of writing which will in turn lead to the best possible outcomes for the children. We want them to express themselves, be creative and expand their imagination through a broad range of stimulus including carefully chosen books, extracts, poems, films and experiences.

Children are taught the rules of basic grammar and spelling through phonics in KS1. By the time they leave our school, we aim to have children who are able, confident spellers with a firm understanding of grammar and punctuation.

## Implementation:

### Planning and Teaching

At Beech Hill, we follow a creative curriculum which sets a theme for that half term. Texts are carefully chosen to fit the theme but also must be challenging and engaging for the children too. Alongside the core text, teachers use poetry, video clips, music, drama, and other sources linked to the topic to broaden the experience and enthuse the children to write.

Teachers carefully plan lessons which ensure National Curriculum coverage for writing, not only in English lessons but across other subjects where writing is a good tool to express themselves.

The National Curriculum states that children should:

- Develop stamina for writing in KS1
- Plan writing verbally (Year 1) and record ideas from Year 2
- Draft writing by composing and rehearsing sentences orally (LKS2) then making choices to enhance meaning in UKS2
- Evaluate and edit their writing by proof reading and making revisions, additions or corrections

Children are expected to write regularly but speaking and listening activities are also incorporated into the planning of English objectives too. Children must produce longer pieces of writing in English books regularly to build a portfolio of evidence and document progress.

The teaching of writing at Beech Hill incorporates many strategies including talk for writing, reading and analysing texts, role play, teacher modelling, shared writing, drafting and editing. As the children move through the school, they have less scaffolding and are expected to be more independent and confident writers. All classrooms have working walls for English which is updated regularly by teachers to reflect the work in lessons, as well as grammar vocabulary appropriate to the year group objectives. Maths, science, history and geography also have dedicated working walls and these all feature a key vocabulary section.

### **Phonics and Spelling**

From the Foundation Stage, children engage in daily phonics lessons using RWI. This continues until Year 2 and into Year 3 if necessary. Pupils are grouped in RWI according to their phonic knowledge. All teachers and teaching assistants are expected to use Standard English when speaking to the children and lead by example with their own use of grammar in the spoken language. If writing, they should model how to structure sentences correctly using accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Spelling is planned and taught both as a discrete subject and within English lessons throughout school, following an online scheme to ensure consistency and familiarity for all children as they progress in our school. Children are set spellings weekly for homework and are given opportunities to practise these spellings during the week in school and are then tested on them. Spelling lists link to the National Curriculum word lists or spelling rules, and interventions are put in place for children who find it difficult to learn and remember spellings.

### **Handwriting**

Adults in school should also model neat, cursive handwriting (where appropriate). The presentation of *children's* work including neat, legible handwriting is paramount at Beech Hill as it shows the pride our pupils have in their work. Our children are taught to use pre-cursive script in discrete handwriting lessons in KS1, then cursive script in KS2 following the Letterjoin scheme, which is also used in teaching materials such as worksheets, displays and interactive resources. Each classroom has a handwriting display and teachers use the script appropriate to their year group when writing on the board. At Beech Hill, we also have many incentives for neat handwriting including a neat presentation stamp, awards for a 'Handwriter of the Week' from each class in celebration assemblies, and *children in Year 3 can earn a 'pen licence' if their teacher thinks they are ready to move on from pencil.*

## Inclusion:

It is important to us that all children are exposed to high-quality English lessons and every effort is made to ensure that even those with Special Educational Needs can access the chosen text or task in lessons. Teachers plan for children with additional needs on an individual basis; this may mean they need pre-teaching, visual aids such as picture books, a differentiated task or outcome, use of a laptop rather than physically writing, or simply to talk through ideas and make a clear plan before writing. Children with barriers to spelling have access to the online platform, Nesy, which they are encouraged to use frequently in school. Spellings are matched to *the pupil's ability focussing firstly on mastering the high-frequency words.*

More able pupils are given extra tasks to complete which are open-ended and require thinking about, such as 'write a response' or 'give your personal opinion'. They may be given a choice in how to approach the initial task, such as to choose which perspective to write from or choose their preferred text type. Teachers may challenge these pupils to give a different response from the rest of the class, such as writing for a different purpose or audience, writing formally as opposed to informally, or encourage them to expand their vocabulary with wider reading or use of a thesaurus to edit and improve their work.

## Monitoring

The teaching of English is monitored closely throughout school as it is a core subject. Lessons are observed regularly by SLT and subject managers and book scrutinies take place at least twice a year. These provide leaders with action points to take forward and give feedback to teachers. There are regular meetings for writing to update staff on developments in the subject and to moderate writing across the school. Year 6 teachers work closely with leaders to moderate writing in preparation for final results.

## Impact

### Assessment and Feedback

#### **Formative assessment of writing**

Writing assessment is an ongoing process throughout the year with teachers setting regular targets in written and verbal feedback. Teachers also feature spot for elements of the year group's expectations which have been achieved in the writing and tick where necessary as a

point of reference for assessment. Age-related tick lists are used after a long piece of writing at teachers' discretion and help to formulate a final assessment at the end of the year.

### **Summative assessment of writing**

In Year 2, the children take the Key Stage 1 SATs tests which give end of key stage results for maths and reading, but relies on teacher assessment for writing. This is based on a portfolio of evidence from throughout the year and teachers measuring the child's achievements against the national standards for writing by the end of Key Stage 1. Teachers use tick lists to show the levels children are working at; working towards the expected standard, at the expected standard, or working above the expected standard. These results are used as a measure and to set targets for the Key Stage 2 results when again teachers moderate their children's writing according to the national expectations. In both Year 2 and Year 6, the teacher assessment of writing is open to being externally moderated in the summer term.

Year 6 also are expected to sit a Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling test which is externally marked and is a good indicator of a child's writing ability.

The other year groups assess writing following an adapted tick list adapted from the local authority, which sets out benchmarks for children to achieve in that year group, working up to the final key stage assessments. They also complete Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling tests appropriate for their age.