



# THE BEDIFFERENT FEDERATION



## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY POLICY

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## INTRODUCTION

The policy for Communication and Language at The BeDifferent Federation supports the vision, values and aims for the whole school that permeate through practice and provision for all subjects that involve communication, language and literacy. We recognise that this policy can be used for cross curricular purposes and make links between the foundation subject areas where appropriate. We aim to develop children's abilities within an integrated programme of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Children will be given opportunities to interrelate the requirements of communication within a broad and balanced approach to the teaching of English across the curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills.

## AIMS

At The BeDifferent Federation we strive for children to be 'Primary Literate'.

We aim for every child in to be able to:

- read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding, orchestrating a range of independent strategies to self-assess and correct;
- have an interest in books and read for enjoyment;
- have an interest in words, their meanings and developing a growing vocabulary in spoken and written forms;
- understand a range of text types and genres – be able to write in a variety of styles and forms appropriate to the situation;
- develop the powers of imagination, inventiveness and critical awareness,
- and have a suitable technical vocabulary to articulate their responses.

We encourage children to:

- develop and apply a knowledge of phonics, sentence structure and grammar to enable them to write in a wide variety of everyday contexts;
- be confident in accessing a wide range of resources to support their writing;
- independently understand and have the ability to use a range of composition structures and use ICT to support their application of those text types;
- show curiosity about different text types, understand the purpose of texts, develop confidence in their writing and recognise how texts can be of personal significance;
- show an interest in fiction and non-fiction texts, develop confidence in reading for personal use and enjoyment and public speaking/reading,
- and show an interest in reading for research.





We support children's development of language through:

- modelling appropriate vocabulary in a consistent way;
- using open ended questioning to encourage problem solving
- modelling curious, questioning behaviour;
- modelling 'writing' – fostering a supportive climate for taking risks;
- seizing every opportunity to support children's understanding and acquisition of phonic and grammar skills and concepts;
- planning appropriate play and learning experiences to develop and extend children's thinking and learning;
- providing stimulating and interesting practical activities in a range of contexts;
- providing a range of resources, books and software to support different strands of literacy development;
- observing and reflecting on children's individual needs and interests;
- sharing mistakes and learning from them;
- and providing opportunities for children to represent their thinking either through mark making, discussion or through writing.

Our staff engage in sustained shared thinking (e.g. engaging in conversations focusing on supporting the children's thinking and learning; modelling 'getting stuck', recapping and reminding, supporting thinking and planning ahead). These strategies are identified on the weekly plan generated by staff dependent on the needs of the children.

To support the writing process, staff provide meaningful and engaging contexts which children can explore in a variety of ways within which they will feel motivated to write. The curriculum is mapped to plan and deliver contextual opportunities to engage the children in the learning. Children with speech, language and communication needs and for those who have English as an additional language have additional support in place to ensure access to the English curriculum. Our learning environments include a wealth of language and grammar prompts in order to expose the children to a broad variety of vocabulary and grammatical terms.

Every member of staff endeavours to ensure children:

- 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 and 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;
- tailor context and features appropriately for a variety of audiences;
- raise awareness of and appreciate the writer's craft through encouraging positive attitudes to the writing process including planning, drafting and editing;
- retain a focus on the improvement and high expectation of core skills i.e. spelling grammar, punctuation;
- and put writing achievement at the centre of the school ethos regardless of stages.

## READING

The teaching of reading begins at the most basic level in our Foundation Stage, with our youngest readers being exposed to a wealth of verbal and visual language. Sounds are taught in order to support children in ascribing meaning to the words they see and hear and children are encouraged to use their early phonics skills to attempt to read some of the most common words. Once children are familiar with the letters and sounds they make, they are introduced to the sounds produced when putting two letters together, for example 'oo' and 'ow'.

Skilled word reading involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Underpinning both is the understanding that the letters on the page represent the sounds in spoken words. This is why phonics is emphasised in the early teaching of reading to beginners (i.e. unskilled readers) in our Early Years.

Children are targeted for reading in school through individual reading and independent reading sessions, which focus on a specific areas of learning decided by the teacher. Children are encouraged to read at home daily and a reading record is sent home with a school reading book, which is changed during the course of the week or once the child has read the selected book.







## **COMPREHENSION (LISTENING AND READING)**

Comprehension skills develop through children's experience of high-quality conversation with the teacher, as well as from reading and discussing a range of stories, poems and non-fiction texts. All children are encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live and to establish an appreciation and love of reading. Reading widely and often, increases children's understanding and vocabulary, because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. It also opens up a treasure-trove of wonder and joy for curious young minds. Good comprehension draws from linguistic knowledge (in particular of vocabulary and grammar) and on knowledge of the world.

Our school library is a place where children can truly enjoy learning. Children know that they can work there independently to investigate and explore using books and our school Chrome Books. There is a weekly class rota so all teaching groups are guaranteed a regular slot to access this resource. It is also a place that fosters a love of reading.

## **THE TEACHING OF WRITING**

Most writing is taught through a variety of cross-curricular opportunities. In addition, children's skills are consolidated through cross-curricular topic work. Writing makes a significant contribution to the development of children as thinkers and learners.

- Composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing):

It is essential that teaching develops children's competence in writing as well as their confidence. In addition, children are taught how to plan, revise and evaluate their own and others' writing. Effective composition involves articulating and communicating ideas and then organising them coherently for a reader. This requires clarity, awareness of the audience, purpose and context, and an increasingly wide knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

- Transcription (spelling and handwriting):

Writing down ideas fluently depends on effective transcription; on spelling quickly and accurately through knowing the relationship between sounds and letters (phonics) and understanding the word and spelling patterns of words. Writing also depends on fluent, legible and, eventually, speedy cursive handwriting.





Specific targets are set for each writing lesson; these are shared with the children and available for the children to access using their personalised Success and Challenge Cards during the lesson. Children are encouraged to plan their writing, following class discussions and by using examples of the expected form shared prior to the writing taking place. Some children may be given a scaffold to help them with their planning.

Starting points for writing are carefully selected to provide a meaningful context, with all writing relating to a chosen topic or theme for the half-term. The context for writing is shared explicitly with the children at the start of the writing session through a carefully structured and planned WALT and success criteria.

Children are provided with the opportunity to plan their writing before any extended writing task and are provided with the opportunity to edit their writing piece later in the week to improve both the context and the conventions of writing. Spelling mistakes of 'known' words are sometimes highlighted and used as a tool for learning but the focus of the marking from teachers will always be on the achievement of the child in relation to the established WALT and success criteria. Conventions of writing i.e. grammar are taught from the child's own writing and also systematically in lessons.

All teachers have high expectations in regard to the standard of children's writing, taking due account of the child's stage of development. All children are encouraged to achieve the highest possible standard of writing according to their stage of development and level of ability. These expectations can be made explicit in a variety of ways:

- use of positive feedback (oral or written) – use of red and green pens identify where children have met the objective and identify next steps to extend learning;
- children may be sent to share their learning with a Senior Leader and receive an achievement certificate presented in assembly for their work
- writing may be shared with the class where a child has achieved the objectives and has written a particularly strong piece of writing
- Writer of the Month and the publishing of a School Magazine.

Classrooms are rich in language, vocabulary, key words, examples of punctuation and examples of children's writing. Talking and reading assist writing and are encouraged in both the classroom and at home to encourage knowledge and use of extended vocabulary and style.





## **THE TEACHING OF SPELLING AND GRAMMAR**

Up to and throughout Key Stage 1, the child's natural curiosity for and enjoyment in words is developed. Rhymes, rhythms, jingles and patterns will be a daily occurrence. Children are encouraged to experiment with spellings and be praised for their attempts. At this stage the main aim is to develop confidence and enjoyment in writing and the written word whilst not ignoring specific spellings of some regular and irregular words.

Children are taught to apply their spoken words and writing consciously and to use the elements of spelling and grammar. This guidance is not intended to constrain or restrict teachers' creativity, simply to provide the structure on which they can construct exciting lessons.

Children are asked to attempt words for themselves before the teacher writes it for them. Automatic use should be made of dictionaries and personal word banks for this purpose. Spelling and/or language development should be fun. Children are encouraged to develop a fascination for words. For this reason, games, puzzles and rhymes will be an essential part of the school programme. In Reception and Key Stage 1, spelling is taught through applying the sound. In Year 2, children are taught to apply and visually discriminate between sounds as well as learn rules as set out in the National Curriculum and continuing to learn common exception words.

In Years 2-6, children have weekly spelling tests with a focus on the spellings identified the previous week and sent home to learn.

## **THE TEACHING OF HANDWRITING**

Handwriting sessions are also used as a focus for spelling and grammar. Attention might be drawn to initial letter sounds, letter strings or phonetic blends as appropriate. Using a multi-sensory approach involving finger tracing can help in learning to spell new words. Research has shown that a flowing, clear and speedy handwriting style helps to improve spelling and sentence punctuation.

The first handwriting lessons are the most important. What is learned then may affect the writer for many years to come. The teacher's attitude is also important. Where an imaginative positive approach is used, it is likely that children will react in the same way. Short handwriting exercises are planned as they produce the best results.





Through our handwriting scheme of work the primary focus is on the correct letter formation leading on to joining letters correctly. First priority should be legibility and the second speed.

Points to note are:

- Ensure that children are comfortable and relaxed and that their pencil grip is correct.
- Ensure that children have appropriate writing tools i.e. pencils are of adequate length and sharpened.
- Individuals should be monitored during handwriting exercises to ensure that the way they form letters, begin words, hold the pencil and position the paper are all conducive to good practice.

## **SPEAKING AND LISTENING**

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in children's development – linguistic, cognitive and social – across the whole curriculum. Teachers ensure the continual development of children's confidence and competence in spoken language. The quality and variety of language that children hear and speak are key factors in developing their vocabulary, grammar and understanding for reading and writing. Children should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and poems and to prepare their ideas prior to writing. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others and teachers should ensure children build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Children should also, be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

The ability to speak and listen is fundamental to children's language and social development. It is an essential tool for all areas of the curriculum, as talk underpins learning and thinking. It is vital that its significance is recognised by children, parents and teachers. Children need to be provided with many and varied contexts for talk, but they also need direct teaching in the skills of speaking and listening.

In our Early Years Foundation Stage, we incorporate the early learning goals into our planning and teaching, which ensures that children:

- access a language-rich environment;
- use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences;
- develop active listening and response;
- model spoken language;
- interact with others in play,







- and use language to follow instructions

At Key Stage 1 we build on children's prior learning in speaking and listening to:

- encourage children to speak according to the context, with consideration for their audience;
- develop children's ability to use language imaginatively;
- express their ideas and feelings when working in drama activities;
- teach children to work effectively and collaboratively in groups;
- join in discussions, making relevant contributions;
- listen carefully and actively;
- and encourage active use of language.

At Key Stage 2 we build on children's attainment from speaking and listening experiences at Key Stage 1 and:

- develop children's ability to speak in a range of contexts with increasing sense of audience and purpose;
- encourage more sophisticated interaction in groups;
- and develop children's ability to respond appropriately to others.

In order to promote high quality speaking and listening, teachers will:

- model dialogue e.g. turn taking, offering opinions and inviting response;
- model listening e.g. the use of non-verbal communication, respecting, even if disagreeing with, the views of others;
- model values e.g. encouraging the participation of retiring or reticent children, praising children who display sensitivity;
- model participation e.g. recognising the value of being seen as a learner alongside the children;
- provide a wide range of contexts for speaking and listening;
- support the children by providing clear structures for tasks which require the children to learn through talk,
- and share roles with the children e.g. as questioner, the 'expert' on a particular topic.

Children have a variety of opportunities to use talk for learning. These will not occur in every lesson but teachers are expected to incorporate them over a period of time. These are:

- playing an active role in directing their own learning, e.g. making decisions about how to approach a task, selecting appropriate resources
- engaging in speaking and listening in a variety of groupings and settings, e.g. working collaboratively on an investigation during group work, reporting findings as a newscaster during a plenary session, interviewing people as part of a research project, acting as a guide for a visitor to the





school, working in partners during talk time on the carpet; one child listening and the other feeding back to the teacher;

- using language creatively and imaginatively, e.g. through role-play, hot-seating, storytelling;
- and demonstrating what they know and evaluating their understanding, e.g. involvement in plenary sessions, use of response partners.

The learning environment is organised to facilitate talk by:

- using space effectively, e.g. by providing listening, role-play and activity areas. At all key stages, furniture and tables are arranged appropriately, creating displays which are interactive;
- providing resources to support speaking and listening e.g. puppets, tape recorders, headphones/headsets, talking books;
- and using themed weeks and planned partner class activities to encourage children to talk about and present books to their younger peers.

Foundation Stage children have opportunities to develop and practise their talk through play, to listen attentively and with increasing stamina and discrimination, to respond appropriately and confidently and to interact with others. This provides a sound foundation for the programme of study for Key Stage 1. It sets out a framework for planning speaking and listening to show progression from Year 1 to Year 6.

At Key Stage 1 children progress through the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. They have opportunities to speak to a range of audiences: describing incidents from their own experience, retelling and telling real and imagined stories, reading stories and poems aloud, and giving presentations to explain a process or impart information. They listen to stories and poems, sustaining concentration and participating appropriately, following teachers' instructions and expressing their views about versions of stories on tape and video. They ask relevant questions of adults and peers and express their opinion of others' plays and presentations. They are taught how to operate in groups, e.g. taking turns to speak, listening to others' suggestions, allocating tasks and reporting group views to the rest of the class. While engaged in speaking and listening activities, children are introduced to some of the main features of spoken Standard English and they are taught how speech varies according to circumstance and audience. In drama the emphasis is on the use of improvisation through role-play as the children play inventively and with concentration. They perform traditional stories and those devised by themselves to their peers and they are involved in the presentation of work from different areas of the curriculum. When reflecting on their own dramatic activities and the performances of others, e.g. visiting





theatre groups, the children consider motives, story development and their personal response to the drama.

In Years 3 and 4, children continue to read stories and poems aloud, both individually and as a larger group, with an increasing emphasis on the use of voice for effect. There are opportunities to listen to, and participate in, storytelling, and children develop their use of talk to explain a model, process or impart information. Children talk in a variety of contexts and reflect on talk, e.g. how it varies for purpose and audience. When listening to a talk by an adult, an audio/video broadcast or a class discussion, children identify main points, ask relevant questions and offer their own opinions. Group interaction is developed, e.g. agreeing a plan for investigation, identifying and using resources effectively, accommodating different views and looking for consensus. Drama is used to explore texts, both fiction and non-fiction and to focus on key elements of narrative development. Children have many opportunities to act in role, using language appropriate to context and recognising how the roles in situations can be approached from different viewpoints. When responding to live and recorded performances, children focus on particular themes, characters and ideas and have the opportunity to compare different types of performance.

In Years 5 and 6 children have opportunities to plan speeches, conduct interviews, both individually and in groups and having presented arguments on matters of concern, participate in whole-class debates. They consider language variation, Standard English and dialect and identify the features of language used in formal and informal contexts. They focus on the language of persuasion and identify how words, sounds and images relate to each other in audio and video broadcasts. Group work is further developed, e.g. identifying next steps for action, modifying plans, achieving compromise, taking on a variety of roles and evaluating the work of the group. Improvisation and working in role are used to explore ways of life in different cultures or historical periods and themes relating to personal, social and moral development. In their response to a variety of performances, children comment critically on the overall impact, their response to the underlying themes and the use of specific theatrical effects, e.g. gesture, movement, sound and silence.

## **INCLUSION**

Interactive teaching methods are employed to engage all children in speaking and listening. Teachers set appropriate challenges for all children. Where children's attainment falls significantly below the expected levels in speaking and listening for a variety of reasons (e.g. language difficulties, acute reticence,





hearing impairment, English as an additional language) then special provision is made for additional support through guided speaking and listening activities.

Opportunities are provided where:

- speaking and listening are the focus of the teaching, even though the subject matter may relate to another area of the curriculum;
- another subject is the focus of the teaching but it is planned and organised in order that children can reinforce and practise speaking and listening skills, e.g. working in pairs;
- and children have opportunities to use talk to investigate, evaluate or report, when another area of the curriculum is the focus for the teaching e.g. demonstrating how an origami book is made.

## **FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT**

The purpose of formative assessment can be used to identify what children know, what children have learnt, what they can do and what their next steps in learning should be. While children are engaged in their writing task, teachers will 'conference' with children i.e. talk to them about their writing while they are doing it as this is considered one of the most effective forms of assessment.

Teachers initial and write 'VF' (verbal feedback) in the child's book as a prompt to the child to note and respond to the issues discussed with the teacher.

Children are encouraged to proofread and edit their own work or that of a writing partner. The children have access to their personalised Success and Challenge cards and will use these as a 'checklist' in order to check what they have achieved and identify their own targets.

After each writing task children are made aware of their next steps in learning either through in-depth marking, verbal feedback or the use of the Success and Challenge Card.

Teachers mark a piece of writing against the learning objective provided at the start of the lesson. Teachers will use in-depth marking, the children's Success and Challenge Cards and the children's writing in order to ascertain how well a child has met the identified objective. This can then inform the teaching for the next day/week.

Children with specific writing or language difficulties may require an individualised programme. This may be planned in consultation with the Inclusion Leader and advice from outside agencies. Planning may reflect the use







of ICT to enhance and develop writing skills or additional support tools such as pencil grips, widget words and personal word banks.

Teachers assess children's work in English by making informal judgements during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses it and uses this assessment to plan for future learning. Written or verbal feedback is given to the child to help guide his/her progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work and are also encouraged to work in pairs to feedback on the work of their peers.

### **Assessment and Recording**

All teachers are responsible for assessment. In partnership with the Chief Executive Headteacher they:

- ensure that some of the key learning objectives selected for assessment purposes in the lessons have a speaking and listening focus,
- and pay particular attention to the assessment of children with EHCPs that relate to improving speaking and listening

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children are given opportunities to:

- speak and listen and represent ideas in their activities;
- use communication, language and literacy in every part of the curriculum,
- and become immersed in an environment rich in print and possibilities for communication.

**Speaking Opportunities at Key Stage 1:** Children should learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They should begin to read and write independently and with enthusiasm. They should use language to explore their own experiences and imaginary worlds.

**Speaking Opportunities at Key Stage 2:** Children should learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They should read a range of texts and respond to different layers of meaning in them. They should explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how the structure of language works.

The English Curriculum is delivered using the National Curriculum. The Early Learning Goals are followed to ensure continuity and progression from the Foundation Stage through to the National Curriculum. Provision is related to attainment, not age. The English Co-Ordinator, Mrs Bull, is responsible for overseeing the planning and delivery of the English Curriculum across the BeDifferent Federation.





Interactive teaching strategies are used to engage all children in order to raise reading and writing standards. Children are encouraged to develop effective communication skills in readiness for later life.

### **CROSS-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES**

Teachers will seek to take advantage of opportunities to make cross-curricular links. They will plan for children to practise and apply the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through literacy lessons to other areas of the curriculum. Wherever possible when planning topics, staff take the focus theme and find high quality texts with which to teach the theme through. For example, in looking at World War Two in Year 6, staff might use the story of Friend or Foe. We would then also use non-fiction books to identify real places that might be encountered to produce fact files or our own versions of the story.

