



# English

## October 2020

Last reviewed by HH	October 2020
Next review date	October 2023

# Beckley Church of England Primary School

## English

### Our Vision

Promote and achieve excellence in all areas of school life. The school will be a place and a community where all children are happy and safe, where they can flourish and achieve their best in a caring, inclusive environment.

**Kindness** is our core value, underpinning our school vision: **“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another” Ephesians 4:32**

### Curriculum Intent

Each child will start learning – seeking knowledge developing skills – to prepare them to make their way and to contribute, to make changes and to thrive in our changing world of challenge and delight. In this we aim to:

- Develop foundations and individual enthusiasm for life-long learning.
- Inspire curiosity, confidence and creativity in all children.
- Teach the children with their strengths and interests in mind.
- Create many opportunities to spark interest for all children.
- Encourage a secure and positive attitude towards others and the environment.
- Be ambitious for every child, whatever their prior attainment or need.
- Encourage resilience through understanding the importance of making mistakes, listening and responding to feedback and being open-minded.

### Aims and Rationale

Our English curriculum aims to equip our pupils with the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding to become lifelong learners and linguists. We aim to instil in each child a creativity and a love of communication and self-expression, through the acquisition and practice of key skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and thus to provide them with the fundamental tools and confidence needed to achieve, both in school and beyond. Through immersion in a challenging text-based curriculum, as well as by introducing them to a variety of visual, audio and performance experiences, Beckley School aims to promote a passion for discovery along with the confidence to extend and give voice to their imaginations.

In recognition of its essential role as a core subject in underpinning children’s understanding in, and enjoyment of, all areas of the National Curriculum and enabling both educational and social progress, studies in English are given lasting and elevated priority across all stages of our pupils’ primary journey.

### Entitlement and Curriculum Provision

English teaching takes place on a daily basis, with weekly class timetables incorporating the discrete provision for the teaching of phonics in EYFS and KS1, and extending to spelling, punctuation and grammar, vocabulary, and guided and independent reading and written composition across all age groups. Each aspect is delivered in context and with strong commitment to teach the value of reading and writing for both pleasure and purpose: shared class texts are expressly selected with this in mind, and regularly with cross-curricular intent.

In addition to daily lessons, extended provision includes opportunities across all ages for local educational visits, intra-school workshops, national competitions, the welcoming of specialist visitors to the school and the provision of a KS2 book club, often springing from links with other schools and with organisations the likes of the Oxford Children's Literacy Festival and Oxford's Story Museum. Sharing assemblies and displays allow children to celebrate their classwork with other members of the school, whilst presentations, recitals and collaborative productions across the year give the opportunity to establish confidence in public speaking and to enjoy acting performance.

## Inclusion

At Beckley Primary School we provide support and resources for success and challenge at all levels. We provide equal opportunities for all learners regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, medical concerns, attainment or background.

## Reading

Teaching children to become fluent and focussed readers, and allowing them to develop a love of the written word in its many forms, is a fundamental part of what we offer to all Beckley School pupils.

We offer rich opportunities for reading, through a broad range of inviting and challenging texts in our well-resourced school library, age-appropriate selections in our classrooms, and the use of other media such as online film resources and interactive websites.

'Book Talk' is a high priority in the classroom, actively encouraging children to reflect and voice opinion around authorial style and intent, as well as to articulate their own experiences and preferences. Each also benefits from regular, independent opportunities, whether reading aloud with teachers, with teaching assistants and visiting volunteers, or when sharing their thoughts at our weekly book club or with 'reading buddies' from classes across the school. Guided reading and comprehension activities, whether 'whole-class' or in differentiated groups, are significant and consistent features of weekly class timetables, whilst children are also able to enjoy hearing their teacher read to them on a daily basis.

That such experiences typically lead to our children's increasingly creative ideas for their own writing, and in developing their vocabulary and spoken language, is without question. To this end also, a broad variety of inspirational and high-quality text types, including short stories, novels, non-fiction, picturebooks and poetry, is evident across the school setting. We ensure that reading books are carefully matched to ability, with selected 'banded books' linked closely to phonics phases in EYFS and KS1, and subsequent 'free reader' texts selected under teacher guidance for both challenge and enjoyment

In addition to weekly, timetabled opportunities, reading is also celebrated through our annual Book Week, when we see children immersing themselves in their love of books through a variety of shared activities. At others times, interactive author-run workshops take place both in school and locally, and there are regular opportunities to enjoy trips to the likes of the local children's literary festival and story museum.

*For specific detail of curricular content and how this aspect of our English curriculum progresses to support our children's learning across each year group, refer to our schools' Progression Documents for English.*

## Writing

The ability of each child to express themselves through the written word is an especially high priority at Beckley, as we aim to maintain a consistently positive climate for writing across the school. With daily writing tasks across the curriculum, each becomes familiar with a broad range of text to suit varied audiences and purposes and learns to reflect on their own creativity as an independent writer.

Well-practised in the skills and strategies involved in teaching writing at each primary stage, and distinctly linked to our reading curriculum in particular, children learn that writing is not only essential to their learning (in expanding, organising and communicating their ideas and understanding) but also that writing is a pleasurable and satisfying activity in itself. Supported by the use of 'what a good one looks like' (WAGOLL) models, group or whole-class 'shared writing' allows the children to witness the composition process, to safely suggest and compare ideas, and to see how practice and improvement is key to the creative writing process.

Writing is taught in context and with real-life purpose, ensuring links to wider curriculum topics where appropriate. Children learn the rules and conventions of varied text types, including a broad and progressive range of fiction and non-fiction, and to choose form and content to suit purpose and audience. Skills and understanding gained through discrete spelling, punctuation, grammar (SPaG) lessons, and vocabulary and handwriting activities can be put into practice, and the children gain confidence in responding critically to their own and others' writing. First drafts are edited to develop content, style and accuracy, after which outcomes can be shared and enjoyed, often published for display (whether handwritten or by incorporating skills acquired in ICT or Art) and/or performed aloud in assemblies.

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## Phonics and Spelling

Fundamental to their initiation and progression in all aspects of English, all EYFS and KS1 children receive daily, differentiated phonics teaching, using a range of materials and activities to follow the phased progression requirements of the National Curriculum. Independent reading books, group and whole class guided reading texts are selected to reflect each child's stage of development.

In KS2, children follow the National Curriculum expectations for spelling, supported by the interactive 'Spelling Shed' teaching program, with weekly lists and challenges allocated by their class teacher according to progress. Additional classroom-based exercises include regular investigations of spelling patterns, focused spelling activities within guided reading provision, dictation exercises and tests.

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## Punctuation and Grammar

As in every aspect of their writing, we aim to encourage learners to fully understand and enjoy the rich nature of the English language, to begin to use it to its full effect and to take command of appropriate skills to enhance their composition, whatever the genre. As such, daily English lessons embrace the need for progressive and comprehensive understanding of how punctuation and grammar is used for meaning and effect, in enhancing readers' enjoyment and understanding of any given text.

Skills are taught in context, with links to children's everyday experiences. From EYFS upward, they are taught specific grammatical terminology and application so that they develop competence and confidence from an early age, and examples of good practice are highlighted in lessons across the curriculum as well as in discrete English sessions. At all stages, children are encouraged to experiment through a variety of approaches, including interactive games and short written activities calling for them to investigate an increasing range of sentence structures, the identification and purpose of different word classes and the accurate use of a growing range of punctuation features.

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## Vocabulary

The acquisition and use of a broad range of English vocabulary, both expressive and functional, is essential in children's successful development and, at Beckley, each child's readiness to experiment with language, whether in everyday conversation or expressly within their writing, is celebrated.

From their early years, and progressively across each class, vocabulary is taught both discretely and implicitly, through 'words of the day' sessions and discussion in the guided reading lessons, as well as in other subjects covered by our School Curriculum. A '3-tier' system ensures a broad selection of vocabulary, from words in everyday use to more robust literary or topic-specific vocabulary. New words are modelled in context and more familiar words are clarified to ensure their accurate use, following which words are displayed by category on a 'working' vocabulary board in each class.

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## Handwriting

Handwriting is a skill which affects written communication across the curriculum and, as such, it is important that children learn to write with ease, speed and legibility. At Beckley, our aims are to teach a progressively cursive style, joining letters as a series of flowing movements and patterns, and to see children applying this across all areas of the curriculum.

Handwriting skills are taught regularly and systematically, with initial teaching in EYFS classrooms ensuring correct letter formation, posture and pencil grip. Children then move on to join certain letters in a cursive style and then increasingly to make their first draft their best copy. As children progress through KS1 and KS2, their general writing practice sees them forming their handwriting automatically, as they move from pencil to pen and steadily show aesthetic pride and pleasure in their finished pieces.

All teachers set a good example by writing neatly and in the style agreed when marking children's work or writing on the board.

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## **Speaking and Listening**

Ours is a stimulating and nurturing English curriculum, through which we guide our children to compose and effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas. Through teacher modelling and the provision of opportunity, they learn to listen, to reflect, to respond appropriately in discussion, to respectfully articulate an argument and, above all, to speak with both the confidence and clarity they need to carry them through their formative years.

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## **Assessment and Attainment**

At Beckley, teachers assess children's attainment daily, using both summative and formative techniques. Where possible, teachers aim for 'on the spot' marking of work in the lesson so that misconceptions can be highlighted quickly and children can deepen their understanding. Children are shared with the school's marking policy, in order for them to take ownership of their learning and work. Using a coded system, children are able to spot comments and misconceptions, reflect upon them and edit accordingly. Teachers put time aside to work closely with children on their independent reflection to help understanding where necessary and challenge them further where possible.

Every term, children will complete an independent piece of writing in their Extended Writing books. This book hosts a portfolio of children's work from previous years in school and highlights, to the children and teachers, the progress that has been made. Furthermore, three times a year, children complete reading (known as PIRA) and SPaG assessments. Teachers use these pieces of work, alongside a programme called 'Target Tracker', to help assess children's progress and attainment.

Through the programme previously mentioned, teachers have the opportunity to view children's progress from previous years in their school journey. Through a data analysis function, teachers can grasp an initial understanding of how the child found a particular skill or area of the curriculum previously. This is then used to inform teachers planning.

At the back of each child's English book is an English Progression Grid. This is a document highlighting what skills the children will be learning and striving to achieve throughout the year. This document provides children with the opportunity to take ownership of their English learning as well as understanding where they have come from and where they are aiming for.

Additionally, teachers are encouraged to use the school's Progression Document for Writing and Reading when planning. These documents provide teachers with a clear picture of where the children have come from, what they are aiming for and where they will be going in subsequent years.

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring of all aspects of English takes place by the English coordinator, Headteacher and the school's Support and Challenge partner. This happens through discussions with teachers at staff meetings, lesson observations, monitoring of pupils' work and analysis of data.

## **Review arrangements**

The implementation of this document will be monitored by the English Co-ordinator and Senior Leadership Team and will be updated in line with new initiatives. This document will be reviewed in October 2023.