



## **Bright Futures School English Policy January 2021**

This policy reflects the school's values and philosophy in relation to teaching and learning English and should be read in conjunction with the school's curriculum policy. All at Bright Futures School recognise the central importance of English as gaining and using skills in language not only affects a child's progress in school, but also has a profound influence upon the course of his or her whole life.

All children at Bright Futures School have an EHC plan, with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Some children have other special needs in addition to ASD, eg Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Speech and Language difficulties. Meeting the children's ASD needs is a priority at Bright Futures School and at the heart of the RDI (Relationship Development Intervention) philosophy to support the social and emotional development of children with autism. Our English policy develops and is amended according to the changing individual needs of the children.

We aim to develop pupils' abilities within an integrated programme of Spoken language (Speaking & Listening), Reading (word reading/decoding/comprehension) and Writing (spelling, handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation). Pupils will be given opportunities to develop their use, knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English within a broad and balanced curriculum, with opportunities to consolidate and reinforce taught literacy skills in all curriculum areas.

All children have daily Key Skills sessions which focus on both English and Maths. Pupils work on specific, individual targets developed in line with individual learning needs identified in EHCPs and from teaching and learning assessments. Staff monitor the progress and amend the targets as required.

### **Aims**

- To support the development of each child's confidence, self-expression and communication skills.
- To promote a positive attitude to reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- To encourage children to become enthusiastic and reflective readers and interested in books and to read with enjoyment.
- To provide meaningful interactive opportunities for children to practise using language in relevant, 'real-life' situations.
- To have an interest in words and their meanings and a growing vocabulary.
- To help children enjoy writing and recognise its value.
- To promote and enable literacy development through individual learning programmes.



## **Objectives**

- To provide a broad range of creative and engaging literacy experiences.
- To match learning materials to the child's level of ability, interests and experiences.
- Staff to liaise regarding an individual's specific literacy learning needs.
- Development of Literacy skills to be promoted across all curriculum experiences.
- Reading is used to develop cultural, emotional, spiritual and social progression.
- To assess English skills using formative and summative assessments to ensure pupils are appropriately challenged and make progress in English skills.
- To use a variety of teaching and learning styles in English lessons because we believe that people learn in different ways.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Our principal aim is to develop children's knowledge, skills, and understanding in English. We do this through key skills sessions, which are usually 1:1 to suit the individual learning needs of our pupils or small group sessions.

Sessions should be:

- Interactive – pupils' contributions are encouraged and extended.
- Supportive – a friendly, supportive environment to encourage learning.
- Well-paced – appropriate to the pupil's ability and engagement.
- Ambitious – there is optimism about and high expectations of success.
- Confident – teachers have a clear understanding of the objectives.

Learning mentors should have:

- Secure knowledge of skills, concepts and technical vocabulary.
- An understanding of every child's prior learning.
- Clear description and presentation of the learning intention.
- Presentation/development of success criteria so that they support each child's learning throughout the lesson.

Lessons should have:

- Opportunities for children to think about and discuss the skills and concepts throughout the lesson.
- Multisensory strategies to engage pupils and meet the needs of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners.
- Feedback throughout the lesson to find out and demonstrate how the learning is progressing.



- Use of strategies to help to assess the learning acquired during the lesson so that the next lesson can be planned to take account of prior learning.
- Appropriate support and challenge for pupils
- Good questioning

### **Speaking and Listening**

All children are given opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills across all learning experiences. We encourage all children to be respectful listeners and to express themselves confidently according to age and ability.

### **Reading**

All staff are made aware of each child's reading ability as soon as assessment is completed/received. Staff strive to offer reading materials daily appropriate to the pupil's ability and engagement. Story sacks are also used to promote engagement in reading through play, multisensory activities aimed to promote language development for early readers. A wide range of fiction and non-fiction books are available in school and online appropriate for each individual pupil's age and skill level. Some children, with reading difficulties receive direct instruction, including multi-sensory programmes such as 'Nessy' and programmes such as Toe by Toe.

All children are encouraged to practise their reading skills across their curriculum and to read for enjoyment. All children have a reading log where details of books read are recorded on a regular basis. Staff assist through paired, shared or guided reading when necessary. Usually pupils visit the local library on a regular basis and are encouraged to choose reading and reference books to read in school as well as at home if desired. Books, story sacks and /or reading records are sent home where appropriate to encourage reading at home. Specific reading targets are the focus in key skills sessions.

### **Writing**

Pupils are encouraged to express themselves in writing using a variety of styles according to purpose, audience and ability level. Pupils are encouraged to write start writing with mark making using creative multi-sensory approaches. Letter formations are developed then pupils are encouraged to use a cursive script in handwriting and to use word processing typing skills. Where children particularly struggle with writing, laptops may be used but handwriting will still be developed as appropriate. Key skills sessions target writing for a range of real-life situations and enjoyment. Specific sessions in key skills sessions focus on developing vocabulary use and understanding, using pre-teach vocabulary where applicable. Spelling strategies are taught in line pupils progression steps identified using Vernon spelling assessments and B squared teacher assessments. Grammar is taught at an age-appropriate level to gain skills in understanding and use of language. Punctuation is also taught to



progression steps attainment. Writing is encouraged with practical real-life activities such as writing recipes for cooking or designing posters for school fundraising opportunities.

### **Assessment**

At Bright Futures School we use B Squared Progression Steps (PS) which is an observation-based, teacher assessment framework for subject specific learning. Progression Steps breaks down the 2014 National Curriculum programmes of study for Key Stages 1 (ages 5-7), KS2 (ages 7-11) and KS3 (ages 11-14). Progression steps range from 1 to 10 (beginning alongside the 'old P level 4' up to the 'old NC level 7'). These smaller, more manageable, assessment points are used to evaluate the performance of pupils who make atypical rates of progress in some or all aspects of their academic development. Information gathered on B Squared is used to inform planning future teaching and learning opportunities. Progress is measured by 'engagement', 'gaining skills and understanding' and 'mastered' achievements for objectives specific to each Progression Step. B Squared progression steps are used to provide information to parents and carers about pupil's academic progress at Bright Futures School.

In English B Squared Progression Steps are measured in Spoken Language (Speaking and Listening), Reading (word reading and comprehension) and Writing (composition, spelling, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation) as a baseline for measuring progress and as a tool for forward planning to develop English skills further.

In addition, phonic checklists and the letters and sounds teaching programme aim to base line assess phonic skills to then teach relevant strands to enable all children to access reading at an appropriate level. Word reading skills (decoding skills) are assessed using New Neale Analysis or Salford Reading tests at least annually in Sept to develop reading skills and reading enjoyment. Reading comprehension using Suffolk Reading Test at least annually in Sept aims to develop skills further to access functional reading requirements and reading for enjoyment. Spelling assessments using Vernon spelling, at least annually in Sept, aims to develop spelling skills to use in real life situations.

Beyond PS 10 pupils and/or at KS4 at Bright Futures may access Functional skills tests, ASDAN accreditation, Cope Awards and other pupil specific courses. There is a strong focus on preparing our young people for success in adulthood in which English skills play an important part. Functional Skills are qualifications in English available from Entry 1, 2 and 3 to Levels 1 and 2.

- Entry 1, 2 and 3 (Access) qualifications meet the needs of learners working below GCSE (Intermediate) level
- Levels 1 and 2 (Intermediate) qualifications are comparable in size to GCSEs. Level 2 is equivalent to a GCSE grade 4 (C on old grading system).



Pupils study for the qualifications in practical ways and apply core skills to real-life situations. They equip students with the practical skills to get the most out of education, work and everyday life and to help them function more confidently, effectively and independently. Functional skills are an accepted part of all Apprenticeship standards and frameworks in England. Having a Functional Skill Level 1 qualification opens more opportunities for pupils to prepare them to achieve accreditation through college programmes or apprenticeship post Bright Futures School.

**Contribution of English to teaching in other curriculum areas.**

The skills that children develop in English are linked to, and applied in, every subject of our curriculum. The children's skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening enable them to communicate and express themselves in all areas of their work in school.

**January 2021**

**Review:** This policy will be reviewed January 2022