

# Beech Lodge School

## Curriculum Policy

### Values and Purposes Underpinning the Curriculum

- At Beech Lodge School we believe education is about developing the ‘whole child’, by encouraging each individual’s intellectual, social, cultural, emotional, spiritual, moral and physical growth
- We believe that children’s full potential will only be realised when their sense of well being and belonging is at its optimum.
- We believe in giving children the opportunities to enable them to become independent learners with the confidence, knowledge and skills to be prepared for life in a rapidly changing and challenging world.

### Aims of the School Curriculum

- The curriculum offers pupils a thorough, fun and practical vehicle through which they develop a joy of learning and a sense of achievement and pride. To achieve this it is essential to make use of the child’s natural skills and talents and take account of the unique nature of each child.
- We work with each child’s strengths, interests and experiences in order to develop their self-confidence, their ability for self-exploration and their effectiveness at collaborative exploration.
- Our fundamental aim is to help each child to think independently, to be able to read between the lines, to question, to enquire, to see the bigger picture and to make connections with their own lives and the wider world.
- The curriculum is modern and holistic in content within a humanist moral framework.
- The curriculum is taught in an active rather than passive fashion, using the outdoor environment, cookery, music and drama to bring the subjects to life and make them meaningful
- All subjects and topic areas of the curriculum are treated as inter-connected, as well as being connected to everyday life.
- The curriculum offers an education ‘in context’; helping the child to also understand the context and history of each topic area.
- The curriculum is designed to be flexible and ever changing, operating within a flexible timetable.
- The curriculum is set up to take into account the individual and unique needs of each child.

- Assessment procedures within the curriculum are designed for the children and are therefore fun as well as challenging.
- The school curriculum is also designed to develop the pupil's sense of identity through knowledge and understanding of the social, cultural, moral and spiritual heritages of Britain's multicultural society and of the local, national, European and global dimensions of their lives.
- By providing rich and varied contexts for pupils to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, understanding and skills, our curriculum enables pupils to think creatively and critically, to solve problems and to make a difference for the better.
- The curriculum provides each child with the opportunity to become creative, innovative, enterprising and capable of working independently and collaboratively thus equipping each child with the skills and confidence, which will underpin both their success in, and enjoyment of life.
- The curriculum also develops their physical skills and encourages them to recognise the importance of pursuing a healthy lifestyle and keeping themselves and others safe.
- The school curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, in particular, develops principles for negotiating the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour as well as understanding the many different cultural, historical and social nuances which make up those boundaries.
- We aim to develop the child's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their own and different beliefs and cultures, and how these influence individuals and societies.
- The school curriculum aims to develop pupils' integrity and autonomy and help them to be responsible and caring citizens capable of contributing to the development of a just society.
- The curriculum promotes equal opportunities and enables pupils to challenge discrimination and stereotyping.
- The curriculum aims to develop their awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environments in which they live, and secure their commitment to sustainable development at a personal, local, national and global level. It also helps to equip pupils as consumers to make informed judgments and independent decisions and to understand their responsibilities and rights.
- The school curriculum promotes pupils' self-esteem and emotional wellbeing and helps them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community.
- The curriculum aim to develop each child's ability to relate to, and empathise with, others.
- The curriculum is designed to effectively enable pupils to respond positively to

opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change and adversity.

- We aim to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education, training, employment and life and equip them to make informed choices at school and throughout their lives, enabling them to appreciate the relevance of their achievements to life and society outside school, including leisure, community engagement and employment.
- To effectively achieve these aims of our curriculum we always try to work in collaboration with the individual needs of each child, with families and the local and global community.
- We believe that the essential prerequisite for effectively achieving these aims is to deliver our curriculum within a small scale, child centred educational environment, which is best suited to ensuring that every child has a genuine opportunity to fulfil their full intellectual, social, moral, creative, spiritual and physical potential.

### **Main Purposes of the School Curriculum**

#### **To establish an entitlement**

- The School Curriculum secures for all pupils, irrespective of social background, culture, race, gender, differences in ability and disabilities, an entitlement to a number of areas of learning and to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for their self-fulfillment and development as active and responsible global citizens.

#### **To establish standards**

- The School Curriculum makes expectations for learning and attainment explicit to pupils, parents and teachers, and establishes fundamental standards for the performance of all pupils in the subjects it includes. These standards can be used to set targets for improvement, measure progress towards those targets, and monitor and compare performance between individuals, groups and schools. However these standards are not rigidly imposed but take careful consideration of the particular and unique needs and history of each child.

#### **To promote continuity and coherence**

- The School Curriculum contributes to a coherent framework that promotes curriculum continuity and is sufficiently flexible to ensure progression in pupils' learning. It facilitates the transition of pupils between schools and phases of education and provides a foundation for lifelong learning.

#### **To establish an education for all**

- To ensure entitlement for all pupils to a broad, balanced, modern and holistic curriculum that offers continuity and coherence and secures high standards.

#### **To raise attainment**

- To raise attainment in all subjects, through careful consideration and understanding of each child's needs and learning methods.

#### **To provide a thorough curriculum**

- To induct pupils into the essential knowledge, skills and discourse of subject disciplines and to develop specialisms appropriate to aptitude.

**To prepare pupils for their future**

- To equip children with the essential social, intellectual and moral awareness that will prepare them for the further and higher education, for the world of employment and for their future self-confidence and well being.

**To increase awareness of community**

- To help pupils become more aware of, and engaged with, their local, national and global communities. The School Curriculum helps children become fully aware of both the differences and similarities of their communities within a fundamental framework of empathy, tolerance and understanding.

**To encourage self-responsibility**

- The School Curriculum aims to encourage pupils to develop a strong sense of self responsibility, to take responsibility for their actions, their emotions and their own health and safety, by being able to make informed choices based on an appreciation of the benefits and risks inherent in the choices they make.

**Ongoing Development of the School Curriculum**

The School Curriculum is specifically designed to remain flexible whilst retaining its core values. This flexibility is essential to allow the school to respond to topical issues and changes in society and the world at large.

As a school, which prides itself on its ability to meet the individual needs of each child, the curriculum itself can also be adapted to the changing needs of our pupils.

- The curriculum is used as a thorough, academic guide, which nevertheless allows for due flexibility and the ability to change and adapt. It is not inviolable.
- The teacher may adapt the curriculum to meet the children's needs, interests and abilities at the time, whilst always ensuring that key areas are covered.
- The curriculum is loosely attached to a term-by-term framework. However, if the class is particularly engrossed in a specific topic area, it will be given more time. This allows the children to experience the rewarding nature of 'in depth learning'.
- Similarly the curriculum operates within a flexible, daily timetable, which allows the teacher to spend as long as feels appropriate and necessary on each subject. The time spent on a lesson is once again governed by the particular needs and interest of each class.
- Interesting topical issues are always given space within the curriculum, whether they are issues raised by the class, the media or world events. Consequently the curriculum is ever changing.
- When certain topic areas within a subject are taught in depth or when new, topical areas are added to the curriculum, it can mean that other, less important or relevant areas receive less treatment or are not studied. However it is to be understood that the fundamental purpose of the school's curriculum is to provide an education based on quality rather than quantity.

**Addressing Individual Needs**

- As a small school with small classes we are in an excellent position to address the unique needs of each child. With a flexible curriculum we are able to tailor the curriculum for the benefit of each individual.
- The first part of the school day is a free choice period. This allows the teacher to offer individual tuition to pupils who, for whatever reason, are struggling with certain aspects of the curriculum.

- The composition of classes is based on ability in each subject. Pupils who have advanced ability in certain subjects are able to fulfil their potential in an ‘older’ class, whereas pupils who are struggling in certain subjects are able to shine in ‘younger’ classes more suited to their particular needs and ability at the time. As a small school, the children all mix freely between the ages, so there is no stigma attached to a pupil attending a ‘younger’ class in certain subjects. ‘Stages not ages’ is our mantra.
- Where there is a broad mixture of ages and abilities in certain classes and subjects the teacher divides the class into appropriate groups during ‘small group work’ midway through the lesson. When the range of abilities is impossible to bridge the teacher will divide the class into two groups, setting work for group A whilst teaching group B. Midway through the lesson the teacher will then set work for group B and work with group A.

### **Setting suitable learning challenges**

- We aim to give every pupil the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. The school curriculum programmes of study set out what most pupils should be taught at each key stage – but we teach the knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that suit our particular pupils’ abilities at any given time. This may mean choosing knowledge, skills and understanding from earlier or later key stages so that individual pupils can make progress and show what they can achieve. Where it is appropriate for pupils to make extensive use of content from an earlier key stage, there may not be time to teach all aspects of the age related programmes of study. A similarly flexible approach is applied to take account of any gaps in pupils’ learning resulting from missed or interrupted schooling.
- For pupils who have been traumatised by previous experiences or schooling and need to follow a gentler pace provision is made to ensure these pupils receive time in the school day to rebuild their confidence and enthusiasm for learning.
- For pupils whose attainments fall significantly below the expected levels at a particular key stage, a much greater degree of differentiation is necessary. In these circumstances, teachers may need to use the content of programmes of study as a resource or to provide a context, in planning learning appropriate to the age and requirements of their pupils.
- For pupils whose attainments significantly exceed the expected level of attainment within one or more subjects during a particular key stage, teachers plan suitably challenging work. As well as drawing on work from later key stages or higher levels of study, teachers may plan further differentiation by extending the breadth and depth of study within individual subjects or by planning work that draws on the content of different subjects.

### **Responding to pupil’s diverse learning needs**

- When planning, teachers set high expectations and provide opportunities for all pupils to achieve. We are aware that pupils bring to the school different experiences, interests and strengths, which will influence the way in which they learn. Teachers plan their approaches to teaching and learning so that pupils can take part in lessons fully and effectively.
- To ensure that we meet the full range of pupils’ needs, teachers are aware of the requirements of the equal opportunities legislation that covers race, gender, sexual orientation and disability.

- Teachers take specific action to respond to pupils' diverse needs by creating effective learning environments, securing pupil's motivation and concentration, providing equality of opportunity through teaching approaches, using appropriate assessment approaches and by setting flexible targets for learning.
- We also trust that if all of the above is set in place individual children will invariably begin to fulfill their potential. Targets for learning are not written in stone and take into consideration that each child learns at a different pace.

### **Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils**

A minority of pupils will have particular learning and assessment requirements which go beyond the provisions described above and, if not addressed, can create barriers to learning. These requirements are likely to arise as a consequence of a pupil having a special educational need or disability .

### **PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

- Curriculum planning and assessment for pupils with special educational needs takes account of the type and extent of the difficulty experienced by the pupil. Teachers encounter a wide range of pupils with special educational needs, some of whom will have disabilities. In many cases, the action necessary to respond to an individual's requirements for curriculum access is be met through greater differentiation of tasks and materials, consistent with school-based intervention as set out in the SEN Code of Practice. A smaller number of pupils may need access to specialist equipment and approaches or to alternative or adapted activities, consistent with school-based intervention augmented by advice and support from external specialists as described in the SEN Code of Practice or, in exceptional circumstances, with a statement of special educational need. Teachers, where appropriate, work closely with representatives of other agencies who may be supporting the pupil. We provide access to learning for pupils with special educational needs by:
  - a. Providing for pupils who need help with communication. Language and literacy
  - b. Planning, where necessary, to develop pupils' understanding through the use of all available senses and experiences
  - c. Planning for pupils' full participation in learning and in physical and practical activities
  - d. Helping pupils to manage their behaviour effectively and safely and, at key stage 3, to prepare for adult life
  - e. Helping individuals to manage their emotions, particularly trauma and stress, and to take part in learning

### **Pupils with disabilities**

- Not all pupils with disabilities will necessarily have special educational needs. Many pupils with disabilities learn alongside their peers with little need for additional resources beyond the aids, which they use as part of their daily life, such as a wheelchair, a hearing aid or equipment to aid vision. Teachers take action, however, in their planning to ensure that these pupils are enabled to participate as fully and effectively as possible within the school curriculum. Potential areas of difficulty are identified and addressed at the outset of work, without recourse to formal provisions for disapplication.

- The school takes specific action to enable effective participation of pupils with disabilities by:
  - a. Planning appropriate amounts of time to allow for the satisfactory completion of tasks
  - b. Planning opportunities, where necessary, for the development of skills in practical aspects of the curriculum
  - c. Identifying aspects of programmes of study and attainment targets that may present specific difficulties for individuals.

## **PUPILS WHO HAVE ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

### **Rationale**

It is our belief that all teachers are responsible for assisting EAL pupils in their language development. Activities which allow EAL pupils to work on tasks with peers who have English as a first language will enhance their language and social development.

### **Aims**

Our main aim is for all EAL children to become confident in listening, speaking, reading and writing so that they can access the curriculum and communicate effectively with peers and adults.

We will identify individual pupil's needs; recognise the skills he/she brings to school and ensure that he/she is able to access the curriculum to the best of his/her ability.

Whilst account is taken of EAL development, the school aims to set appropriate and challenging targets for individual pupils which are reviewed on a regular basis.

### **Key Principles**

- Language develops best when it is used in purposeful contexts across the curriculum.
- Effective use of language is crucial to the teaching and learning of every subject.
- The language demands of learning tasks need to be identified and planned for. Attention should be given both to initial access and to extension.
- Access to learning requires attention to words and meanings embodied in each curriculum area. Meanings and understandings cannot always be assumed but need to be explored.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants have a crucial role in modelling uses of language.
- A distinction is made between EAL and Special Educational Needs.

## Monitoring and Assessment

- An initial assessment of an EAL pupil's ability in English is made when he/she enters the school using the 'Common European Framework for Languages' criteria. (Appendix A)
- Information is gathered about:
  - the pupil's linguistic background and competence in other languages;
  - the pupil's previous educational and schooling experience;
  - the pupil's family and biographical background.
- Beginner and Pre-Elementary learners of English are assessed in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening within their first half term at the school
- Intermediate and advanced EAL pupils are assessed in terms of National Curriculum and EYFS levels(EAL Levels 2 – 8).
- Whilst account is taken of EAL development, the school aims to set appropriate and challenging targets for individual pupils which are reviewed on a regular basis.
- Staff have regular liaison to discuss pupil progress, needs and targets.
- The school ensures that all EAL pupils have access to statutory assessments, making full use of special arrangements including first language assessment/ support where appropriate.

Staff use support strategies to ensure curriculum access through the following methods:

- Collaborative group work;
- Enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening;
- Effective role models of speaking, reading and writing;
- Additional verbal support e.g. repetition, alternative phrasing, peer support;
- Additional visual support, e.g. objects, pictures, demonstration etc.;
- Bilingual resources, e.g. dictionaries, on-line support, bilingual staff/pupils, texts, key word lists;
- Multi-media language resources;
- Writing frames and scaffolds;
- Discussion is provided before and during reading and writing activities;
- Opportunities are taken to focus on the cultural knowledge explicit or implicit in texts;
- Where possible, learning progression moves from the concrete to the abstract;
- Ensuring that vocabulary work covers the technical as well as the everyday meanings;
- Covering not key words, but also metaphors and idioms;
- Explaining how spoken and written English have different usages for different purposes;
- Providing a range of reading materials to exemplify the different ways in which English is used;

Teachers ensure that children are able to access the curriculum by;



- Using texts and materials that support their ages and learning stages;
- Providing support through ICT, video and audio materials, dictionaries, relating their home

## **INCLUSION IN ALL SUBJECTS**

To overcome any potential barriers to learning in all subjects, some pupils may require:

- Support to access text, such as through prepared recordings, particularly when working with significant quantities of written materials or at speed.
- Help to communicate their detailed ideas in tasks that require extended writing, through alternative communication methods such as the use of ICT or speech, to allow them to demonstrate their understanding and to maintain their concentration and motivation.
- Non-visual means to access sources of information when undertaking enquiries into each subject.

## **BUILDING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INTO THE CURRICULUM**

Personal development is an essential aspect of Beech Lodge School's curriculum. The Schemes of Work provide opportunities to plan sequences of work, learning outcomes and teaching approaches that support personal development .

The Curriculum provides pupils with a broad range of opportunities for developing different skills important for learning and for life beyond the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to apply their different skills in everyday situations as they spend time planning and developing their work, make choices and decisions, and think creatively and independently.

- The curriculum incorporates the development of many cross-curricular skills including skills essential to English, History, ICT, Geography, Science, Religious Education, Maths, PSHE and Art and Design. Although cross-curricular activities take place in each lesson, time is also given in the timetable for thematic days and activity weeks.

Cross-curriculum dimensions provide important unifying areas of learning that help young people make sense of the world and give education relevance and authenticity. They reflect the major ideas and challenges that face individuals and society. Subjects and topics are not taught in isolation but with constant reference to other subjects in the curriculum or other topics areas. At all times children are encouraged to see and investigate the connections between different disciplines as well as the connections with their own lives. Cross-curriculum dimensions include the key areas of identity and cultural diversity, healthy lifestyles, social participation, enterprise, global dimension and sustainable development, technology and the media, and creative and critical thinking.

- One of the fundamental aims of the curriculum is to allow the pupil to see and be able to make connections between their everyday, real lives and the occasional abstract nature of academic learning. To this purpose, pupils are assisted in all subjects, to see how a subject area, whether a mathematical problem or a passage of literature relates to and mirrors their everyday lives.

- This is firstly achieved through teacher led discussions at the beginning and throughout each lesson, involving every child and thus ensuring that each pupil has a concrete understanding of the topic area.
- Secondly, everyday life connections are made through field trips related to each subject. The school's location in the countryside is an invaluable and much used resource in this respect.
- All subjects in the curriculum are taught in an inclusive manner, which makes links between other subjects.
- Literacy is a cornerstone of all subjects and is applied in the majority of lessons with reference to, and often in conjunction with, the literacy lessons taught at the time.
- Where applicable numeracy skills are also accessed in a variety of lessons, from collecting data in subjects such as Geography and Science to assisting in the understanding of Music.
- IT skills are used in all subjects, from Internet research to recorded work.
- Drama is used in all subjects to help illustrate a topic area, from enacting an historical event to acting out the behaviour of atoms in different states.
- The pupils are always made aware of the crossover points between the Sciences, Design and Technology, Music and Geography, which usually cover similar topic areas in the same year.
- Educational visits and the use of experts from outside of the school further broadens the pupil's perspective and understanding.
- As well as making connections between other subjects and with the pupil's everyday lives, the curriculum is also designed to help the child understand each subject in its own context.
- The pupils use their knowledge acquired from everyday life, from other subjects and from previous topic areas within the subject studied to hypothesise and answer questions for themselves.
- All levels of assessment are designed to be fun and without pressure, but nevertheless challenging.
- All assessment procedures are used to help the child, not to set them up for failure. Children are encouraged to learn from their mistakes rather than see them as an indication of failure.
- Assessment procedures vary according to the children's age and, to a certain extent, ability.
- Children are assessed on an informal, daily basis. Assessment is also carried out by the teacher in the extensive class discussions that form an integral part of each lesson, as well as in individual tuition sessions. The children also do regular fun quizzes and academic based 'challenges'.
- In the Secondary classes assessment is ongoing through observation, through class discussion input, through group and individual activities, through regular homework and through more formalised tests
- The children are principally assessed on project work carried out throughout the year.

Updated January 2014