

English Policy

Rationale

The study of English Language and Literature is a core subject entitlement for all our students. It is also, as a principle means of expression, a fundamental set of skills which take priority at the school. Literacy is embedded in all areas of learning; explicitly in the classroom and implicit in the wider daily life of the School and beyond into the residential settings.

Each student follows a personalised programme based on previous reports and entry level assessments which take place as soon as we feel the student is settled at school.

We offer personalised English programmes of work based on the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1-3 where appropriate; these programmes are differentiated by the teacher to take into account the ability and interests of the student. Students are able to work with resources which match their ability levels rather than chronological age.

Our staff support students to acquire language skills in order to: ensure social inclusion, experience enjoyment in learning, gain life skills and achieve economic and emotional well being.

Aims

Our students will learn:

- To develop understanding and appreciation of a variety of texts and media
- The vocabulary and grammar of standard English & variations including dialect
- How to speak fluently and appropriately in different contexts
- To listen, understand and respond critically to others

Teaching and Learning

All students will have **Literacy targets** informed by their entry assessments and other data which will be shown on their '**Student Profile**' created soon after referral. This will determine the Personal Education Programme which they will follow.

Teachers plan and deliver the curriculum using a wide variety of teaching strategies including differentiation by task, text, seating, support materials and guided work. (See Curriculum policy).

Timetable

In keeping with the schools aims, we have structured the curriculum to give attention to the **acquisition of key skills in Literacy** at the beginning of the day when we feel most students are more receptive to academic work. These discrete sessions will be skills-based to target those areas identified by each student's entry assessments. However, woven into the curriculum, there are opportunities for students in English lessons to work on cross curricular modules linked to other topics e.g. PSHE as well as on compiling coursework for accreditation.

Special Needs

English/Literacy is **embedded in all curriculum areas**; sometimes this may take the form of opportunities for Speaking and Listening Skills acquisition in, for example, Humanities, or for **Emotional Literacy** in Art and Design, or PSHE.

Use of ICT in English

The use of **information technology** has been proved to be successful in engaging students who are reluctant learners, particularly those whose writing skills are unpractised.

For students at KS3, the use of ICT allows teachers to focus on **whole class language skills. Groups or individuals** can then work at their own pace with support.

Students can work at their own pace as each have access to a laptop or PC and this also encourages **Independent learning** as students are then motivated to take responsibility for their own programmes where possible.

Staff also use the whiteboard and PCs to **break texts down into small manageable sections** which are more accessible for our students. The **use of animation and illustrations** can be easily added through the use of ICT to complement texts and allow **contextual clues** for students to support learning.

English, Mathematics and Science are taught with the incorporation of **online resources (English - Wordsmith, Rapid Reading, Mathematics - Abacus and Science - Bug Club)** which increases the likelihood of engagement in our students,

Cross curricular

English/Literacy is **embedded in all curriculum areas** which is evident in schemes of work and lesson plans; this will take the form of opportunities wherever possible for **Speaking and Listening Skills acquisition** in, for example, Humanities, or for **Emotional Literacy** in Art and Design, or PSHE. **Key words and subject-specific literacy** are addressed within each subject area and are the responsibility of each subject co-ordinator.

Assessment recording and reporting

Formal and informal assessment is essential in order to inform us of students' progress and the value or otherwise of our curriculum. Teachers are aware of the need for systematic checks on acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills necessary. We use a wide range of daily, weekly, termly and yearly assessment evidence to measure each student's progress against personal, local and national criteria. We use this data to inform our planning and the three year school development plan.

Baseline/entry level assessments in Literacy, Numeracy, Non-Verbal Reasoning (to gauge potential where there are problems with obtaining other information e.g. for non-readers) are made as soon as appropriate. Information from this data and any other available will form the original '**Student Profile**', which will form the basis of all initial targets and inform our planning.

Student's **progress** is measured daily, weekly, and at the end of each half term when a comprehensive review takes place.

Methods of recording include:

1. Against a student's **individual** targets (on Student Profile and/or IEP)
2. Against criteria within the **module/unit/syllabus** they are studying, and which is recorded in staff mark books
3. Against **national criteria** (which are formally recorded at least three times a year).

We encourage **self evaluation** through the use of the **Student Progress file** and **Key worker time** where students are encouraged to discuss or choose work which demonstrates achievement and look for areas where they need support.

Although students will take part in a range of activities, their collection of work in English will consist mostly of what they have written. Therefore we endeavour where possible to

also record **non-written contributions** in the form of video, photography, audio and artwork, particularly where there has been some progress (however small) in their personal and social skills which are a key focus for all our work.

Our policy is to report on progress in all areas weekly in staff meetings (and recorded in student's IEPs) and termly in more formal student reports which carry Band levels and commentary of wider positive contributions and achievements. We are aware that these documents may have a wider audience than those of mainstream students and therefore consider the content accordingly.

Records of achievement which cover all areas of work are extremely important for our students who are leaving school. It is a priority to record all positive achievements and reflect the areas of study undertaken while the student is at the School so that future provision has a clear record which can be continued and built on.

Resources and environment

Students are taught within a small suite of rooms within the care home which have been designed to create a nurturing environment where they feel secure and which provides a comfortable base. Each room's use is clearly defined and forms an important means of communicating aims, objectives and expectations in the form of a variety of well presented and up to date displays.

Allowing students to present their work well (through artwork or use of IT) contributes to good behaviour, motivation and confidence.

Students are guided to achieve very quickly once they join the school and this is made visible and therefore celebrated by all.

Key words in all subject areas are displayed in line with National Strategy and all displays are regularly changed to reflect and reinforce the learning objectives.

Planning and reviewing

A systematic planning routine is important so that all staff (including care staff) and students are aware of the overall pattern of the teaching day, week and term. This allows us to keep clear links with our holistic and curriculum aims and to keep consistent records.

Where more than one member of staff may teach areas of the curriculum, careful planning and liaison needs to take place to minimise unnecessary repetition or to prevent the teaching content to appear random, irrelevant or unstructured. Such a system also eases the induction process for any new or temporary staff and avoids disruption, which can be so de-stabilising for our students.

- Each **Curriculum Policy** is linked to the aims and objectives of the school and shows the rationale, approach and discrete aims for each subject area.
- **Schemes of Work** show long and medium term planning for the projected year and term based on the Units of Work modules or adapted National Curriculum programmes of study. Policies and Schemes of work will be reviewed and updated if necessary at the end of each term initially to reflect the developing nature of the new school.
- **Daily Lesson plans** are drawn up by the teachers who have responsibility for each subject or by the staff team in collaboration where there is a cross curricular theme. They show clear and concise specifications of what students are expected to learn and how and when learning is to be undertaken. Learning outcomes and assessment strategies are to be clearly stated. These will be available to be viewed by the Headteacher.

Teachers will be expected to keep up to date written copies of all their planning in accessible files in the school.

Policy review

This policy document will be reviewed by the Headteacher on an annual basis to ensure it is up to date with current legislation and best practice.

Date approved: April 2014

Date last reviewed: September 2023

Next review (or before): September 2024

Signed: 

Position: Education Director

Staff Acknowledgement

In signing this document I am confirming I have read the information and have an understanding of the procedures outlined within the information provided.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this document with a Senior Leadership member of staff to gain further clarity.

I also know that if I feel I need further guidance I know I can access through the Headteacher.

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