



Curriculum Policy

Curriculum

The curriculum at Beacon Hill School is vital to the achievement of all its aims. It is the product of all the school's resources, organisation and endeavours. The curriculum is the means by which the school empowers all its students to enable them take their optimum place in the world after school.

The Curriculum at Beacon Hill helps the school meet its agreed aims in the following way.

- that has high expectations for continuous improvement in order to raise standards for pupils

An innovative, interesting and challenging curriculum will enable pupils to be motivated and to learn and so to raise their achievement.

- in which all partners include, involve and inform each other

It is important that all partners in pupils learning are involved in the development and evaluation of the curriculum to make sure it meets the needs of the pupils in a holistic and challenging way. This is especially important for parents, members of the multi disciplinary team and young people themselves.

- that actively develops parental partnerships for the benefit of the pupils

As above parents have an important part to play in the curriculum through home learning and the way in which they give young people the chance to have a range of varied experiences and opportunities at home.

- that positively promotes and encourages independence, confidence and self advocacy
- that gives pupils the skills and opportunities to make informed choices

One of the aims of the curriculum at Beacon Hill is to develop young people's independence and ability to express their own views and opinions. This is delivered across the whole curriculum but is especially important at KS4 and 6th Form.

- that values communication and provides the time and opportunity to make it effective

Communication is also an especially important part of the curriculum and has a specific whole school emphasis.

- that extends inclusion within and beyond the school

For some young people it is important that their curriculum is delivered through teaching in inclusive settings. This ensures pupils have access to specialist teaching but also mainstream role models. This enhances the basic curriculum and helps the school deliver this aim.

- that celebrates achievement for all

The celebration of pupils' achievements across the curriculum is vital for their success and for their learning. The schools system of stickers and Beacon awards and certificates values the work that pupils do across the full range of their curriculum.

- that works in a creative and enterprising way to fulfil these aims

As a specialist college for business and enterprise the full range of business and enterprise skills and opportunities are vital to and a focal part of the curriculum for the whole school.

It is important that the curriculum meets the individual needs of all students whilst protecting their entitlement to a full range of educational experiences. Beacon Hill actively seeks therefore to deliver the curriculum to each pupil in a way which meets their individual learning needs and which constantly examines teaching styles together with the context and climate in which in teaching and learning can take place.

Access

Access is created for all our young people by the staff devising imaginative and innovative learning programmes so that no student whatever their level of difficulty is denied access to the curriculum. The use of technology is fundamental to ensure the curricular access of pupils who would otherwise have difficulty accessing particular areas of work.

It is an important principle at Beacon Hill that pupils have the right to equal access to the curriculum whatever their gender, race or disability. The equal opportunities policy details ways in which this equal of opportunity is ensured and monitored. Every pupil at

Beacon Hill is included in all aspects of curricular activities and has opportunities to be involved in extra curricular events.

Features of the Curriculum

Beacon Hill's curriculum has five main elements

1. The National Curriculum and Religious Education.
2. The Enhanced Curriculum
3. The Ethos or Hidden Curriculum.
4. The specific curriculum entitlement for pupils at different Key Stages including specific entitlement for all pupils but especially those in the Secondary and 6th Form departments to Business and Enterprise curriculum reflecting the schools specialist status.
5. Extra Curricular opportunities

1. The National Curriculum and Religious Education

All pupils at Beacon Hill aged 5-16 have access to National Curriculum Programmes of study at a level appropriate to their ability. Curriculum content from all Key Stages is assessed for its appropriateness to the pupils and many of them will for most of the time be working on content designed for pupils at an earlier Key Stage. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties will also use the National Curriculum as a context in which to learn the early developmental work essential for them.

This work will be delivered through schemes working towards Level One of the National Curriculum and through specialist curriculum content. No subject or area of the National Curriculum is ignored however the depth to which each subject or area is studied varies due to the pupils' needs, ability, aspirations, interests and aptitudes.

Emphasis is given to particular skills to reflect the individual priorities set out in the pupil's statement of Special Educational Needs.

Religious Education is taught according to the school's agreed policy

2. The Enhanced Curriculum

This element of the curriculum is vital to ensure that individual needs are met and that pupils can in future function with the greatest degree of independence possible. This element also links to the school's emphasis on personalised learning which works to ensure that all pupils have the most appropriate opportunities for them even if the focus is different than for the rest of their class. This element obviously links to the National Curriculum and includes

- specialist therapies for those who need them
- specific individual programmes where appropriate.

- personal, social and health education.
- life skills.
- Enterprise.
- careers guidance and education
- work on social skills delivered through inclusion placements in other schools and colleges.
- Specific focus on the triad of impairment for young people with ASD especially those in the specialist ASD classes. This focuses on the development of communication, social interaction and flexibility of thought.

The emphasis given to each of these areas is different for each Key Stage. This emphasis changes as the student's progress through school.

3. The Ethos or Hidden Curriculum

This is the most difficult part of the curriculum to define but in a sense helps to decide and define the other areas. It is this part of the curriculum which helps us to meet all our aims but not in a specific way. It seeks to develop the students socially so that they know right from wrong and can take responsibility for themselves. It is this part of the curriculum which can only succeed if staff, parents and governors work together towards agreed aims. Indeed this "ethos" was an important feature in the decision about the school aims. The Hidden Curriculum is demonstrated by every reaction or statement of every member of staff, parent or governor to any situation and its impact on students should never be underestimated.

This part of the curriculum is underpinned by direct teaching in all areas of the curriculum but especially in Personal, Social and Health Education, Religious Education, Self Advocacy, enterprise, citizenship and Social Skills work.

The departmental system in school also develops this hidden curriculum by endeavouring to prepare pupils for change and for life after school. It does this by creating categorically different experiences for pupils at different times in their school life.

4. Specific Curriculum content and organisation at each Key Stage

Early Years

Pupils attend Beacon Hill both before and after statutory school age. For both of these groups a specific curriculum is set. At Early Years this includes the Foundation Stage Curriculum of, Language and Literacy, Creative Development, Mathematics, Knowledge and understanding of the World and Physical Development. Appropriate content from the enhanced curriculum detailed above is also delivered. This curriculum is taught mainly in a class group to allow students to develop a sense of group identity and security in school. It is seen as vital that this curriculum offers a progression into and the statutory curriculum and that individual targets remain important.

Key Stage One

The curriculum at Key Stage one is mainly the National Curriculum but with a specific emphasis on English (especially communication) and Maths skills. At Key Stage One pupils continue to be based mainly in their own class but begin to work in bigger groups for some key subjects.

Key Stage Two

The curriculum at Key Stage Two focuses on the national curriculum and personalised targets. Pupils work in ability groups for core subjects and also PE to enable them to mix with a wider group of pupils but also to allow for differentiation and challenge.

Key Stage Three

At Key Stage Three the curriculum has been adapted to take into account the Curriculum 2008 changes and therefore has an emphasis on Enterprise with all students having accredited opportunities in this area. Students are taught by specialist teachers where possible and move around the department for different lessons. The curriculum makes full use of the specialist subject resources now available and opportunities for joint working with Burnside students.

Key Stage Four

At Key Stage Four students study a reduced number of National Curriculum subjects and all their work is accredited. There is an increasing emphasis on Business and Enterprise. Students are taught by specialist teachers where possible and move around the department for different lessons. The curriculum makes full use of the specialist subject resources now available and opportunities for joint working with Burnside students.

Post 16

At post 16 level work is based on ensuring the students have as many planned opportunities as possible to use their academic skills in practical situations to allow them to generalise their skills. All the curriculum is accredited and contains elements of personalisation. Business and Enterprise especially work experience has a particular focus. (See specific policy)

It is seen as vital that this curriculum offers a progression extending out from the statutory curriculum and that individual targets remain important

5. Extra Curricular Opportunities

Throughout school, but especially as pupils get older appropriate extra curricular opportunities are provided to extend pupils learning. Recently these have included

- A Healthy eating club at Key Stage 3

- Personal appearance groups at 6th form
- Independent travel training in the school holidays.
- Residential opportunities in the UK and abroad.
- PE competitions etc.

Where possible we also give our students access to inclusive extra curricular opportunities.

Key Features of the Curriculum

All elements of the curriculum are planned to show breadth, balance, relevance and differentiation. It also shows progression in all subjects and aspects of the curriculum and coherence and continuity between subjects, year groups and Key Stages.

1. Breadth and coverage of the curriculum offered is seen at Beacon Hill as a valuable result of the National Curriculum. Young people share an entitlement to a curriculum which broadens their horizons and open the world up for them. This is seen especially in the study of MFL by KS3 students.

2. Balance in the curriculum is ensured by the careful attention to individual needs and the carefully discussions which take place every year for every Key Stage. Decisions about balance at each Key Stage are taken by staff and governors in consultation. Beacon Hill devises a curriculum which is balanced in terms of curricular elements but which also responds to the student's needs as outlined in their statement. These personalised aims are specifically reported on at each student's annual review.

3. Relevance in the curriculum is ensured at Beacon Hill by offering age appropriate curricular which are suited to each pupil's needs ability, interests and aptitudes. Relevance is particularly important as most pupils remain at the early stages of the National Curriculum for all of their school life. The departmental system in Beacon Hill ensures that these pupils as they progress through the school are taught through methods and approaches suitable to age, ability and interests. The views of young people are important in this and are sought through school council and pupil reports.

4. Differentiation is the key to the Beacon Hill curriculum and a young person's need for such detailed differentiation is a prime reason for they're attending Beacon Hill School. The school fosters the ability to respond to each individual young person, observe, assess and identify learning needs and hence to plan individual learning programmes accordingly. For some pupils including those on the autistic continuum the school is developing the use of appropriate elements of the T.E.A.C.C.H. approach and other specialist approaches for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. These approaches are available for pupils through the school but specifically for those in the specialist provision .The school has detailed information related to each student, where he or she is at, and what his/her learning

goals are. It is this information which ensures that, within a broad outline, each pupil has an individualised timetable designed to meet their own needs. Each pupil also has an Individual Education Plan which details Aims of Provision, Yearly and Termly targets. Progress towards these is recorded and the information shared with parents. Pupils are increasing aware of and take as much responsibility as possible for their own targets.

5. Progression and continuity is ensured by careful planning in all areas of the curriculum. Work is currently ongoing to ensure that schemes of work will be in place to embed this principle firmly in our planning and practice. However, flexibility is also seen as important to respond to our students' needs in terms of pace depth and final career path. The school works closely with the Connexions Service to match the skills of our pupils to their future after school.

6. Inclusion is very important to Beacon Hill school and we are always actively seeking extra places for our pupils in appropriate mainstream environments. The aims of this inclusion are to provide our pupils with age appropriate role models, to allow them to learn to work within larger groups than is normally possible and enable them to develop their social and communication skills in a mainstream setting. For some older pupils such placements also allow them to have access to specialist teaching and inclusion not available in Beacon Hill.