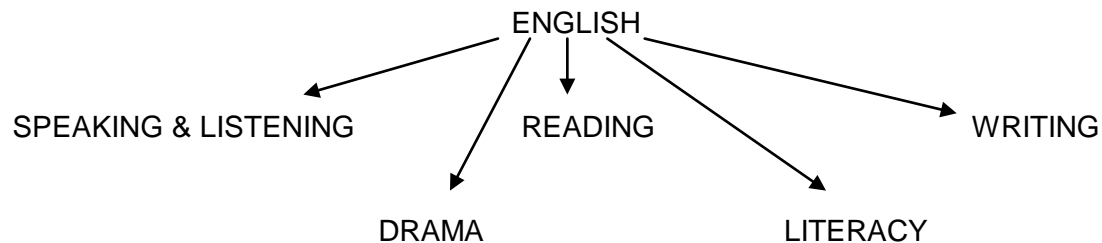




English Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Basic Skills Policy, Alternative Communication policy, Reading Policy, Writing Policy and the Speaking and Listening Policy.

This policy is named English to locate its position within the National Curriculum and so emphasise the entitlement of the pupils to this curriculum. It should be taken to include all areas also known as language or communication, The Primary Framework for Literacy and Drama. (See diagram below)



PRINCIPLES OF THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

“The importance of English to all other areas of the curriculum cannot be overstated and the circumstances which help to develop and use language to the full in speaking, listening, reading and writing must therefore be a priority for every pupil and not just the more able.” (DES 1988b.)

“The development of communication and listening skills is an essential step towards reading and writing for pupils with severe, complex and profound and multiple learning difficulties.” (Implementing the Literacy Hour for pupils with Learning Difficulties 1999)

“The ability to communicate gives children the capacity to participate more fully in their society” (The Primary Framework for Literacy 2007)

- The teaching of English should ensure that work in Speaking and listening, reading and writing is integrated. It is important that work fosters enjoyment in all three areas through the appreciation of stories, valuing listening to others, the love of books and the importance of self-esteem in learning.
- The teaching of English requires a whole school approach in order to create an environment which ensures consistency and continuity for pupils and where learning is age appropriate.
- An essential element of continuity requires parental and multi-professional liaison.

- It is important to create an environment with high teacher expectation for the development of all communication skills, tailored to the specific needs of the individual.
- English is about enabling pupils to make sense of their environment through the written word, symbols, pictures, signing and all other channels (multi-sensory experiences).
- Access to 'English' may enhance the Spiritual Development of pupils.
- I.C.T. provides essential access to all areas of the English Curriculum.
- It is important to develop pupils ability to communicate effectively, with regard to their race, gender, age & ability, enabling them to take greater control of their own lives.
- Drama activities are a useful way to develop skills in Speaking & Listening and are included at every Key Stage. The importance of drama related activities is emphasised in the Primary Framework for Literacy (2007)
- Where communication is developed purposefully, self esteem and social development improves.

LINKS TO SCHOOL AIMS:

Beacon Hill School and Specialist College for Business and Enterprise is a community:

- *That has high expectations for continuous improvement in order to raise standards for pupils.*
The ability to speak, listen, read and write affects a person's ability to achieve their potential in all areas of life. A high quality English curriculum is vital to the development of skills in all other areas and, hence, to the raising of standards across the school.
- *In which all partners include, involve and inform each other.*
Beacon Hill School works closely with both parents and external agencies, including speech and language therapists and teachers for the visually/hearing impaired, for the benefit of the pupil. External agencies are involved, where appropriate in planning, target setting and reviewing to ensure consistency between approaches.
- *That actively develops parental partnerships for the benefit of the pupils.*
At Beacon Hill school, parents are actively encouraged to play a part in their child's education. It is recognised that parents play a key role in the development of communication skills. It is important to give parents the opportunity, with school, to develop their child's skills in English – through homework activities, and library books.
- *That positively promotes and encourages independence, confidence and self advocacy.*

Being able to communicate choices, evaluate situations and make decisions are vital skills for all pupil's at Beacon Hill school to develop. These skills will help pupil's to develop self advocacy, confidence and more independent living.

- *That values communication and provides the time and opportunity to make it effective.*

Beacon Hill School values communication highly, and recognises it's importance in all pupil's lives, in order for them to be able to communicate with others effectively, and integrate into society more fully. The school is well resourced with reading materials, ICT equipment and communication aids. Teaching staff work closely with speech and language therapists to develop effective communication for individual pupils, and all staff use Makaton in school.

- *That extends inclusion within and beyond the school.*

Skills in all areas of English are valued both in school, and in mainstream settings. The ability to communicate, read and write enhances pupils' ability to mix in the community and inclusion placements, and facilitates access to outside opportunities.

- *That gives pupils the skills and opportunities to make informed choices.*

Pupils at Beacon Hill School are encouraged from an early age to make choices in a range of situations. This may be through the use of communication aids where appropriate. Being able to make informed decisions will help develop self confidence and independence skills.

- *That establishes an atmosphere of security, trust and respect for all.*

Pupils at Beacon Hill School are given opportunities to speak and communicate, as well as having an understanding that they will be listened to by others, including school staff. This enables an environment of security, trust and respect to be evident, throughout the school.

- *That celebrates achievement for all.*

Pupil's increased ability to communicate should be celebrated in a variety of ways. All forms of communication e.g. communication aids, big macs, PECs and symbol boards/books, must be equally valued.

- *That works in a creative and enterprising way to fulfill these aims.*

Beacon Hill School recognises that children learn in different ways, and will respond to some methods of teaching better than others. Staff use a range of strategies including multisensory methods, in order to teach the skills involved in all areas of English.

GUIDELINES OF THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

- Teachers should support individual pupil's access to English using the appropriate means. For students with ASD, equality of opportunity will be ensured through the use of appropriate ICT, Visual and Physical Structure and PECs.

- Pupils with ASD will develop skills in social interaction and the use of language (development of speaking and listening skills, turn taking and being able to communicate effectively), and flexibility of thought. Careful planning will ensure that all pupils with ASD can develop skills in all 3 areas of the triad of impairment.
- English is planned and recorded by teachers termly, weekly and daily and is not necessarily topic specific, although links will be made where appropriate.
- Every pupil will have a specific English/communication target on their termly Individual Education Plans.
- The % of time for English will reflect the recommended allocation in the National Curriculum for each Key Stage. There is a daily literacy lesson in each Key Stage, up to Key Stage 3. There is also a daily phonics session for all pupils up to Key Stage 3 (this may form part of the Literacy lesson).
- I.C.T. needs careful planning in order to form a useful part of the English curriculum. It is already recognised as a powerful tool in the classroom, particularly for those with problems in communicating. It should form an integral part of the English lesson not something extra, merely tagged on.
- Resources in school will assist continuity and progression across Key Stages and Departments.
- The new Primary Framework for Literacy (2007), builds on the Early learning Goals. Pupils in Foundation Stage classes at Beacon Hill School will work on the Early Learning Goals for English i.e. Communication, Language and Literacy.
- Pupils will access the most relevant Key Stage content, given their I.E.P's. Teachers will ensure that pupils receive their entitlement to age appropriate content.
- National Curriculum work will be assessed through teacher assessment (ongoing), and pupils will have access to the end of Key Stage tests and tasks if appropriate. Pupil's achievements will be recorded in their end of year reports.
- All pupils at Key Stage 4 and above will have access to all relevant forms of accreditation for English - e.g. ALL, ASDAN, AQA etc.
- At 16 plus the importance of good communication skills is emphasised in self advocacy and work opportunities.
- Pupils working towards National Curriculum level 1 will work towards specific targets taken from the 'P' scales and PIVATs for English.
- Rates of learning and achievement will be variable and valued individually.
- Levels of attainment will be recorded for individual pupils using PIVATs, through to National Curriculum Level 4 (reviewed termly, and submitted annually).

- Teachers need to be aware of the 3 principles of Inclusion for their planning and teaching of all pupils. - setting suitable learning challenges, responding to pupil/s diverse learning needs and overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment.
- Teachers need to have high expectations, flexibility in approach, an awareness of the requirements of Equal Opportunities legislation for race, gender and disability and an awareness of English as an additional language.
- Multi-disciplinary cooperation, particularly with the Speech and Language Therapy Team and occupational therapists, will be used to meet the specific needs of some pupils.
- Links with parents should be a 2-way channel of communication with work, books, symbols etc sent home regularly and feedback received.
- Teachers will have access to up-to-date training on Literacy and new staff in school will have opportunities for training in early communication, signing, symbols etc.

Rachel Maloney – Literacy Coordinator – June 2008