



THE BEECHES
INDEPENDENT SPECIAL SCHOOL

The Beeches Independent Special School

Curriculum Policy

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Signed by:

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Date: 17.03.2023

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Chair of
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Introduction

The Beeches Independent School is a small special needs school, for children and young people aged between 9 and 19 years providing personalised education for students with a range of learning disabilities. Many of our students have a diagnosis of an ASD and associated conditions and some are non- verbal or experience barriers to communication.

Many of our pupils arrive at the school following a period of considerable disruption to their education involving significant periods of being out of school, exclusion; voluntary or enforced, and a history of challenging behaviour, anxiety, or negative educational experiences.

Our emphasis is on creating an inclusive curriculum with learning experiences which serve to progress the skill set of each learner, whatever their ability. Our curriculum content is relevant and purposeful and provides learning to impact a lifetime, with EHCP objectives underpinning all we do. Skills learnt are transferable, with appropriate planning and support, into the home, the local community, and future placements. The Beeches Independent School offers a safe and secure environment where each pupil is valued and is encouraged to participate as fully as possible.

Our pupils currently do not complete national academic qualifications. Our pupils' complete internal assessments with a focus on their interests and life skills. Pupil's ability is thoroughly assessed using internal assessment providing a clear level of ability for each individual pupil. Through our adaptable, ambitious and individualised curriculum we aim to provide our pupils with the resources and knowledge they require to achieve their potential, including potential qualifications.

Statement of Intent

The Beeches Independent School is committed to providing an engaging, creative and knowledge rich curriculum for each of our young people. Every pupil, regardless of ability, will progress in their learning and experience stimulating, enriching and meaningful activities. Pupils will thrive in an environment which encourages them to ask questions and take risks. They will become confident individuals, with a strong sense of themselves and their place in the world, prepared for the next stage in their lives.

1. Implementation

Our curriculum at The Beeches Independent School is designed using the National Curriculum objectives with the aim of enabling each pupil to acquire a firm foundation in all the essential elements of each subject. They are taught in either small groups or 1:1 according to age, ability or need.

Through the use of rigorous formative and summative assessments, highly differentiated lessons are carefully planned to take account of not only age and stage of learning but also prior knowledge, gaps in learning and the specific needs and learning preferences of individual pupils. Lessons are designed to build confidence and resilience, they build on prior knowledge and students are encouraged to make connections within and between their learning to their own experiences, the community and wider world. Where possible learning is enriched by visits and experiences.

Cross curricular links are made and carefully planned activities are designed to encourage enquiry and motivate the pupils through allowing them to take ownership of their own learning journey through the use of activities which they can access their learning and make it relevant and meaningful to themselves.

Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to work towards their EHCP targets whilst introducing them to accredited qualifications and developing their skills in preparation for the world of work and adulthood. Subjects studied include:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Computing and ICT
- Humanities
- Food technology
- Art
- PE
- RE
- PSHE

For those pupils unable to access this curriculum an alternative, Individual Learning Plan is created, interweaving the EHCP targets with working on their readiness to learn, this will include communication, early literacy and numeracy skills, investigation and exploration, sensory regulation, engagement, and attention. The learning needs of this group of pupils are best met through an approach that places relationships at the heart of activities and focuses on social, moral, spiritual, and cultural experiences.

Post 16 Study

Our Post-16 offer varies according to the needs, abilities, and interests of the student. Studies at Key Stage 5 may comprise of: functional literacy and numeracy, emotional literacy, effective communication, independent living and preparing for adulthood, budgeting and finances, healthy relationships and sex education, personal development of interests and skills, employability skills and work experience.

2. Curriculum statements for each subject

English

At The Beeches Independent School, we intend for all pupils to experience an inspiring, language-rich and motivational English environment. We aim to foster a love of books and reading, alongside a positive culture of writing, for a variety of purposes and audiences and across all subjects within our broad curriculum.

Children will begin their early reading and writing development supported by excellent synthetic phonics teaching, giving them the foundational skills needed to confidently segment, decode and build words. During their time at The Beeches Independent School, all pupils will be given the opportunity to immerse themselves in a wide variety of texts from a range of different cultures. Through shared texts and explicit teaching, they will experience a wide range of vocabulary, giving them the understanding and power of language that they need to be successful in their next stage.

Our intent is for every child to leave our care as able and independent communicators, with the confidence and skills required to read and write fluently. They will be thoroughly prepared in all aspects of English and fully equipped for the next step in their journey.

Our English curriculum is based on the National Curriculum objectives. These guide teachers in their planning of well-structured and exciting learning opportunities that enable our children to learn, revisit and progressively develop their skills in English at a level which meets their individual needs.

Phonics

The teaching of phonics supports children in early reading to develop their phonic knowledge. We use a synthetic approach which guides them step by step, from learning initial sounds to reading and writing sentences with confidence and fluency. This leads onto a structured spelling scheme where rules are taught explicitly, and words are chosen to support cross curricular writing and are embedded in children's writing.

Reading

Students are encouraged to read a range of fiction and non-fiction books for pleasure on a daily basis, allowing them to develop and maintain their fluency skills. Reading out-loud to an adult is a fundamental part of this and regular questioning takes place to establish levels of understanding and ensure that the text chosen is at an appropriate level of challenge. Teachers also deliver guided reading sessions weekly, explicitly teaching the students essential comprehension skills, and giving them the opportunity to develop their fluency through modelled and shared reading of the text for example through echo reader or readers theatre. Formative assessments against National Curriculum objectives are ongoing, enabling teachers to check pupil progress, identify gaps and adapt the teaching of reading as necessary.

Writing

Our Book Based curriculum puts high quality literature at the heart of literacy learning in order to raise engagement and attainment. Teachers choose texts which fit with the wider curriculum, and plan sequences that will provide opportunities to explore themes and issues and sustain ideas through discussion. Through modelling, scaffolding and independent practice, students develop to become confident writers for real purposes and audiences. All students, regardless of ability, are encouraged to explore empathy and develop creative responses through, drama, storytelling and artwork. Importance is placed on functional skills and students study English as a language; they learn to communicate confidently in both spoken, written, or signed English, understanding the importance of this as a life skill. Students work towards appropriate accreditation at a level tailored to each individual.

Math's

At The Beeches Independent School, we intend for all pupils to experience an inspiring, number-rich, and motivational Math's environment. We aim for all pupils to have access to a math's curriculum which meets the needs of all learners and equips them with the mathematical skills necessary for them to succeed on whichever path they follow.

Our Math's Curriculum at The Beeches School is delivered with the needs of individual pupils at the core of it. The National Curriculum is used as a guide to support teachers in delivering a well-structured and thorough program which covers all areas of mathematics necessary to become confident mathematicians. Pupils are given learning experiences that provide them with opportunities to learn, revisit and progressively develop their skills in math's and apply their knowledge in other subjects and to living skills.

Science

At the Beeches independent school, our science curriculum intends to provide an inclusive and accessible program of study that supports their learning needs and abilities. Our overarching goal is to enable every pupil to engage with and enjoy science, and to develop a sense of achievement and confidence in their scientific skills and knowledge. It is designed to be flexible, responsive, and tailored to meet individual learning needs. We intend for our pupils to develop an understanding of basic scientific concepts and principles, with a focus on practical and hands-on learning experiences. We aim to build confidence and positive attitudes towards science through successful experiences and scaffolding support. They will develop scientific inquiry skills, including the ability to ask questions, observe, measure, and record data, and make predictions.

Our science curriculum is designed to be differentiated, multi-sensory, and engaging. We use a range of teaching and learning strategies that are responsive to pupils' diverse learning needs, including teacher-led instruction, pupil-centered activities, and investigations.

We provide opportunities for pupils to engage in hands-on, practical investigations and experiments that allow them to explore scientific concepts in a variety of ways and make connections to the world around them.

Humanities

History

At the Beeches Independent School, we aim to develop in our pupils an understanding and appreciation of the past. We aim to provide pupils with a broad and balanced view of History in Britain and the wider world, whilst teaching pupils to develop the skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation and problem-solving which will prepare them for the next phase in their education. At the school we aim to ensure that pupils develop a secure knowledge that they can build on, our History curriculum is organised into a progression model that outlines the skills, knowledge and vocabulary to be taught in a sequentially coherent way.

At The Beeches Independent school, the first opportunity to introduce pupils to vocabulary associated with History is implemented as early as possible. Staff follow Statutory framework which aims to guide pupils, to make sense of their physical world and their community they live in. Listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world in which we live, and be aware how this has changed over time. Pupils are introduced to vocabulary associated with history as they explore the passing of time in their own lives and learn about significant events in the past.

Geography

At The Beeches Independent School, we believe that Geography helps to provoke and provide answers to questions about the natural and human aspects of the world. Pupils are encouraged to develop a greater understanding and knowledge of the world, as well as their place in it. Our desire is to provide our pupils with a sense of awe and wonder about the world they live in. Our aim is to equip our pupils with knowledge about diverse places, people, resources, and natural and human environments, together with a deep understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes and we aim to expand their geographical vocabulary. We also aim to inspire pupils to enquire and develop an interest in their local area. The geography curriculum at our school enables pupils to develop knowledge and skills that are transferable to other curriculum areas, and which can and are used to promote their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

The curriculum is designed to develop knowledge and skills that are progressive, as well as transferable, throughout their time at The Beeches Independent Special School and also to their further education and beyond. Our curriculum is designed to provide our children with the subject-specific language they need to describe, question, and discuss the world, as well as their place in it. Our pupils are encouraged to recognise that they have a voice and to use it confidently to debate topics that they feel passionate about, for example, deforestation or renewable energy. We aim to produce well-rounded individuals by providing our children with opportunities to expand their cultural capital and experiences of the world.

Our whole curriculum is shaped by our school vision which aims to enable all children, regardless of background, ability, additional needs, to flourish to become the best they can possibly be. We teach the National Curriculum, supported by a clear skills and knowledge progression. This ensures that skills and knowledge are built on year by year and sequenced appropriately to maximise learning for all pupils. Geography at The Beeches Independent School is taught in blocks throughout the year, so that pupils can achieve depth in their learning. Pupils will access resources to acquire learning through atlases, textbooks, maps, digital technology, and photographs. At the beginning of each topic, pupils are able to convey what they know already as well as what they would like to find out. This informs the programme of study and also ensures that lessons are relevant and take account of pupils' different starting points.

Great thought is given to how pupils will be supported in line with the school's commitment to inclusion. Teaching and learning should show progression across all key stages within the strands of Geography. Educational visits will enhance pupil's cultural capital and children will learn and revisit the importance of our world and how it should be treated through a range of activities and experiences. Teachers are clear about which skills to teach in each topic they cover and therefore teach high quality lessons which build on pupil's prior knowledge, skills and understanding. Lessons are planned to promote different levels of learning. Questioning is used to promote different levels of thinking (evaluative, creative, and innovative) and prompt recall in children, encouraging them to reach conclusions on their own.

Food Technology

At the Beeches Independent School planning and delivery considers the varying needs and abilities of our pupils. Practical lessons require careful supervision and close adherence to and observation of risk assessments. Understanding of SPD (Sensory Processing Disorder) ensures that teachers handle sensory issues sensitively.

Planning caters to the strengths, interests, and barriers that our young people have whilst also maintaining the desire to promote and encourage a move towards independence. For example, learning is linked to budgeting and the Eat Well Pate Recipes are utilised to develop students' own tastes and budget.

Through food technology the pupils have an opportunity to learn the theory of food; the production, marketing, healthy diet and budgeting to ensure a holistic understanding of the importance of diet and food. Alongside this the pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills while creating a variety of dishes from around the world and dietary options. The food technology curriculum provides the pupils with the knowledge and skills they can transfer to their life outside and beyond school.

Art and Design

At the Beeches Independent School, our art curriculum aims to provide a creative outlet for our pupils, enabling them to develop their imaginative and expressive skills. Through our art program, we intend to encourage pupils to explore a variety of mediums, styles, and techniques, and gain an appreciation for different forms of art. Our art curriculum also seeks to promote an inclusive and supportive learning environment, where all students feel valued and empowered to express themselves.

Our art curriculum intends to achieve the following objectives:
Develop pupils' artistic abilities: Our curriculum aims to help pupils develop their artistic skills and techniques through a variety of mediums such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and mixed media. We strive to help pupils understand and appreciate different forms of art, and experiment with different styles and techniques.

Encourage self-expression: We aim to encourage pupils to express themselves through art, and to help them develop their imagination, creativity, and communication skills. Our curriculum will help pupils to use art as a means of self-expression, and to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Foster inclusivity and respect: We intend to create an inclusive and respectful learning environment where all pupils feel valued and respected. Our curriculum aims to promote respect for diverse cultures, beliefs, and opinions, and to encourage pupils to create art that reflects their unique perspectives and experiences.

Our art curriculum will be implemented through a range of activities, including:

Practical activities: Pupils will have the opportunity to participate in a range of practical activities, including drawing, painting, sculpture, and mixed media. These activities will be tailored to individual pupil's abilities and interests. At the Beeches Independent School, we encourage group projects where pupils work collaboratively on group projects, enabling them to develop teamwork and communication skills.

Art appreciation: We will introduce pupils to different forms of art and artists and help them understand and appreciate the different styles and techniques used.

Exhibition opportunities: We will provide opportunities for pupils to exhibit their artwork, enabling them to gain recognition and build their confidence.

Computing and ICT

Our aim at the Beeches Independent School is to provide a high-quality computing education which equips pupils to use computational thinking and creativity to understand the technological world around them. The carefully written resources (files, videos and instructions) allow pupils to gain access to, and work through, the National Curriculum for Computing & IT at their own pace. The unique individual marking program allows progress and how essential skills are acquired and being used in everyday situations. Pupils will have the opportunity to gain an understanding of computational systems of all kinds, whether or not they include computers. The Curriculum is designed to incorporate the aims of the National Curriculum for Computing.

Pupils at the Beeches Independent School are able to develop depth in their knowledge and skills over the duration of each of their computing topics. Teachers use knowledge of each pupil as a starting point for the planning of their computing lessons, which are often richly linked to engaging contexts in other subjects and topics. The Curriculum sets out the sequences of each week but not in any order as pupils learn at different rates. With these modules young people will be prepared for life beyond school whether that be college or in the wider world as they cover the functional skills required in our digital world. The content is intended to be delivered at a time when the pupils need the skills. By the time our pupils leave school they will have gained an understanding of computational systems of all kinds, whether or not they include computers. Pupils will work in partnership with their peers in the work produced during lessons and peer feedback allows for them to develop their confidence. Pupils will also complete summaries and quizzes to evaluate their understanding in order to reflect upon their learning and consider ways to improve their work.

Physical Education

We recognise that our pupils may have physical barriers to participating in physical activity, or conditions that may require close monitoring during periods of activity. We are also aware that many of our students display behaviour that challenges and that this means that off-site visits and activities need to be staffed accordingly. We plan activities to meet the capabilities and interests of our students, as well as developing their fitness and social skills. Our PE lessons are designed to be catered towards each pupils needs.

RE

The RE curriculum allows pupils to explore religions, their community, and personal development and well-being. The lessons have the intention of providing a high quality, coherent and progressive experience of the subject, with scope for cross curricular learning. Through our RE programme, we intend to encourage the learners to identify, investigate, explore and respond to a variety of different issues, religions and world beliefs.

SMSC, personal growth and community cohesion are featured throughout the curriculum and are there to ensure opportunities for learners to develop positive attitudes and values; also to reflect on and relate their learning in RE to their own experiences. The intent is to make sure that learners understand the relevance of RE in today's modern world and how it affects their lives.

The intent also seeks to promote an inclusive and supportive learning environment, where all students feel valued and empowered to express themselves.

Our RE curriculum will be implemented through a range of learning opportunities and activities including:

- Focusing on celebrations and rituals
- Learning about the world's religions including a deeper understanding of the origin of the religions, their stories, beliefs, and teachings
- Key words in specific languages
- Places of worship
- Enrichment activities: Learners will visit different places of worship in the local area. These visits will provide the learners with an opportunity to experience first-hand the different places of worship that they have learnt about and to meet with representatives of the religion and to ask them questions.

The emphasis will be on personal growth and community cohesion.

The impact of the learning will be for our learners to have a better understanding of the religions that make up the landscape of the UK and the wider world and how they can learn from and work alongside each other to create community cohesion. All learners will be more informed about their position in the world and the decisions that they can make impact in their future. All learners in the school will be able to communicate more confidently about their wellbeing, oral and cultural development for the society in which they live. The RE curriculum will promote inquisitive minds, respect, tolerance and understanding for all those around them including themselves.

PSHE

The scheme aims to give children the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they need to effectively navigate the complexities of life in the 21st Century. The curriculum covers key areas which will support children to make informed choices now and in the future around their health, safety, wellbeing, relationships, and financial matters and will support them in becoming confident individuals and active members of society. We implement our PSHE curriculum through PSHE association and DFE guidance which is taught weekly in all pupils. Each lesson follows a specific sequence allowing us to connect with the children and open their minds up to learning. We then introduce new information, concepts and skills using different activities. We also provide the children the opportunity to manipulate and play with the new information in order for it to make sense to them. Reflection is an important aspect of their learning experience and progress, so this is also woven into our sessions.

Our children will be able to:

- Justify their choices and stay safe in their different environments.
- Be problem-solvers and be more democratic.
- Identify strategies that will allow them to stand up for themselves and what they stand for.
- Develop their confidence, ability to work as part of a group and be able to deal with disappointments.
- Avoid unhealthy relationships.
- Understand the various ways that boys and girls are different both physically and in personality and discuss how to protect theirs' and others' privacy.

3. Impact

The Beeches Independent School ensures that the children build on their prior learning and experiences so that they progressively know more, remember more and ultimately make connections which will allow them to have skills for life. Pupils enjoy learning, they are passionate, enthusiastic, take accountability for themselves and are respectful.

4. Pupils with additional needs

Pupils attending The Beeches have an Education, Health and Care Plan which often specifies therapeutic input into their curriculum e.g., the provision of Speech and Language Therapy; we ensure that such provisions are met. Although not a therapeutic school, we have strong links with external agencies to provide support where relevant e.g., Occupational Therapy, or Speech and Language.

If it is considered by The Beeches staff that the needs of pupils with additional needs are not being provided for adequately, we will liaise with the placing authority to ensure that their EHCP reflects their true needs. Referrals to outside agencies to support the social and emotional learning of our young people will be sought; this serves to have a positive impact on the learning experiences of our pupils.

5. Preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of British Society

Work in PSHE and in the day-to-day interactions within our school stress the importance of positive values: knowing right from wrong, honesty, integrity, acceptance, understanding, personal responsibility, reflection, resilience, compromise and forgiveness.

Many of these are difficult concepts for our pupils to come to terms with and so the importance is constantly modelled and revisited day in day out. Pupils are encouraged through positive praise and examples to take on these values to understand the importance of them to live a happy and healthy life in modern Britain.

6. Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural

A key element of every pupil's experience at The Beeches Independent School is to prepare them to live in society. For young people with SEND the world can be a disorienting and confusing place, where people do not react and respond in the way that their mind predicts. They are supported in their learning to manage and cope with the unexpected, to see change as non-threatening, to regulate their own feelings, fears, and emotions and to accept differences between varying cultures and traditions that are not their own.

To achieve this, we strive to give pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they affect peoples' lives. We encourage pupils to explore and develop what interests them and others and encourage them to reflect and learn. We give pupils the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions and the way they affect people. We also create an environment where all pupils can grow, flourish, respect others and be respected.

The Beeches Independent School promotes measures to prevent discrimination based in race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria and gives pupils opportunities across the curriculum to explore and develop moral concepts and values such as personal rights and responsibilities, truth, justice, equality of opportunity, right and wrong. An open and safe learning environment is provided in which pupils can express their views and practice moral decision-making – **protected characteristics**.

Pupils are supported in recognising and respecting the codes and morals of the diverse cultures represented in the school and wider community. We encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions; to respect school property, to care for the environment, and to develop codes of appropriate behaviour.

The Beeches Independent School will promote a sense of community, with common, inclusive values which ensure that everyone, irrespective of ethnic origin, nationality, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and religion can flourish. We encourage pupils to work co-operatively and to recognise and respect social differences and similarities.

Helping pupils develop personal qualities which are valued in a civilised society, for example thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, independence interdependence, self-respect and encouraging pupils to challenge, when necessary and in appropriate ways, the values of a group or wider community. We provide opportunities for engaging in the democratic process and participating in community life and provide positive and effective links with the world of work and the wider community.

Pupils are provided with the opportunity to explore their own cultural assumptions and values and present authentic accounts of the attitudes, values, and traditions of diverse cultures. The Beeches Independent School will address discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and other criteria and promoting racial and other forms of equality and extend pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language.

Opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in cultural events to extend their cultural awareness.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Education and Curriculum and the proprietors.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and relevant stakeholders.

Scheduled review date: September 2024