



## Curriculum Policy

### Introduction

The Beeches Independent School aims to create a curriculum which is relevant and purposeful for all our students; Learners will follow an individualised programme of study, with EHCP outcomes underpinning the structure of their educational day. The skills learnt are transferable, with appropriate planning and support, into the home, the local community and future placements.

### Aims & Objectives

#### *Primary – Key Stage 2 (Year 6)*

Primary – Key Stage 2 (Year 6) The Beeches offers learning in line with the National Curriculum objectives for pupils entering at age 10. The curriculum is tailored to the individual needs of the pupil and is supported through a communication - centered environment. Classes are taught in core and non- core foundation subjects: Literacy, Numeracy, Humanities (History, Geography and Religious Education), Science, MFL (French), Design technology, ICT, Art, Music and Physical Education (to include swimming).

#### *Secondary – Key Stage 3*

During Key Stage 3 teaching, we will aim to ensure that a sound basis is developed for all students, with different profiles of ability and performance, in a variety of areas across the National Curriculum for this age range. Whilst all lessons are planned using the National Curriculum as a starting point, these will be highly differentiated to meet the abilities and needs of the individual. This stage of the curriculum should prepare the pupils for the coming years of gaining qualifications and accreditation; it also helps teachers to develop an in-depth knowledge of each student's 'spiky profile' of abilities so that the school is then able to develop strengths whilst accommodating a variety of needs. The students in Key Stage 3 are offered opportunities to practise what they have learnt in a classroom setting in the world outside, thereby consolidating their understanding. This is achieved in a wide variety of ways during the latter part of the school day when pupils are involved in activities in the community, around the school, educational trips, sporting activities (using local sports facilities) and involvement with their peers, both from The Beeches School and, wherever possible and if appropriate, from other local schools. The curriculum at The Beeches addresses the main areas of impairment of autism alongside each student's individual academic achievement. We ensure that education is delivered effectively in an environment which is communication –focused, whilst delivering

highly structured and focused lessons which ensure students continue to progress in all areas; social and emotional, cognitive and behavioural and physical.

### *Key Stage 4/Key Stage 5*

In Key Stage 4 and 5 the structure of the curriculum continues to follow the National Curriculum and lessons are structured accordingly; teaching is very focused on delivering these requirements whilst also equally taking into account individual differences, abilities and interests in learning. Along with the core subjects; English, Maths, Science and ICT, students are offered options in a variety of subjects and skills at different levels according to ability. These optional subjects include: History, Geography, Art, and Food Technology. PSHE is included for all students and encompasses life skills, citizenship and work-related learning. All pupils are taught PE as a foundation to keeping fit and healthy and to encourage involvement in sporting activities outside of school time.

The curriculum at Key Stage 4/5 is structured towards learning the skills required by students who have autism to ensure a better quality of life for them in the future; emphasis is placed therefore on English, Maths and Life Skills throughout the curriculum. Emphasis will also be given to areas of study which will help students to achieve independence after they leave The Beeches Independent School. Their study will also include Careers Guidance, independent Living Skills and, where possible, appropriate work experience placements. The school also offers pupils the opportunity to take examinations and accreditations at a variety of levels including AQA Unit Awards, GCSE, and Functional Skills Entry Level qualifications, depending on the ability of the student.

Students in Key Stages 4 and 5 are given many opportunities to practice what they learn in the school setting, as well as in the world outside school. This is achieved through involvement in the local community around the school, structured work experience, the use of local sporting facilities and involvement with peers through visits to other school level activities and colleges and sports club/ team activities. For those pupils who are able and wish to follow a higher level of education arrangement will be made to study at a local college or specialist teaching would be provided.

### **Pupils with additional needs**

For those students attending The Beeches who have an Education, Health and Care Plan which specifies extra input into their curriculum e.g. the provision of Speech and Language Therapy, we will ensure that such provisions are met. Although not a therapeutic school, we have strong links with external agencies to provide support where relevant eg, Occupational Therapy, or Speech and Language. If it is considered by The Beeches staff that the needs of students 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 students.

## Whole School Ethos

The purpose of the holistic curriculum is to help students to:

- Develop an understanding of the world in which they live
- Have sound numeracy and literacy and ICT skills
- Develop personal and moral values, respect for shared values and for other cultures, religions and ways of life
- Acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and a world of rapid and continuous technological change
- Take their place in society as informed, confident and responsible citizens

## Main Principles

The curriculum should have the following characteristics: breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression and continuity, coherence.

Using a carefully combined selection of methodologies and current best practice adapted to meet the unique needs of each individual, The Beeches Independent School focuses on supporting and encouraging communication, choice making, social and vocational skills, developing self-care and life skills and self-managing behaviour.

Emphasis is placed on creating meaningful and functional learning opportunities which build on each individual's strengths and interests to provide a person-centred approach applied across all settings with consistency throughout the day.

Teaching at The Beeches Independent School ensures all students acquire knowledge, skill and understanding as they progress through the curriculum designed to meet their special educational needs. This practice is multi-sensory, language centred and connective. Learning is the process through which the students can develop their knowledge, skill and understanding to the point where they have retained and generalised what has been taught. Teaching and learning is carried out in a context which is relevant and meaningful to all students on the autistic spectrum to ensure effective learning and appropriate accreditation. Our active schemes of work are created to be responsive to the needs of students and staff are reflective, allowing for truly personalised learning.

All staff will work in such a way that the learning environment is one which is calm and consistent, with clear communication to students about what is expected of them, both in a group and as individuals. This will ensure that students are able to process information and maximise the learning experience throughout each day allowing them to realise their full potential.

The curriculum design across all age ranges connects each student with the acquisition of knowledge, skill and understanding related to minimising the effects of the Triad of Impairment in Autism. This design makes meaningful connections for students which maximises their potential for success, access and independence.

The curriculum should be subject to planned evaluation and review.

## Outcomes

*The curriculum should:*

- Deliver the current and future statutory requirements
- Be broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated
- Enable pupils to fulfil their own potential
- Prepare students to make informed and appropriate choices post 16
- Meet the needs of the full range of abilities within the school
- Ensure continuity and progression within the school and between phases of education

- Foster teaching styles which will offer and encourage a variety of relevant learning opportunities
- Encourage a respect for the school and its environment so that learning is a positive and pleasurable experience for all
- Help students to develop lively, enquiring minds, an ability to question and an ability to apply themselves to tasks and physical skills
- Help students acquire understanding, knowledge and key skills relevant to school, adult life and employment in a fast-changing world
- Help pupils to use language and number effectively
- Help pupils develop personal moral values, respect for religious values and tolerance of other races, religions and ways of life
- Help pupils understand the world in which they live
- Help pupils to appreciate and celebrate human achievements and aspirations

*The school will therefore endeavor to provide:*

- an environment in which young people with autism spectrum disorders are able to develop the skills and attitudes which will facilitate lifelong learning and sustained personal development.
- a flexible and active curriculum to meet the specific needs of all pupils
- an extensive range of opportunities available to pupils, which best meet their needs and interests.

Within our child-centred approach to education we maintain the following outcomes:

1. **Being healthy:** all pupils are encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle, physically and emotionally, and become confident and safe in an environment in which they can live and learn without fear or anxiety.
2. **Staying safe:** young people continue their education within our organisation with the necessary support and provision required. Our students have the right to learn in a safe and secure environment.
3. **Enjoying and achieving:** our staff and pupils strive together to deliver and achieve high standards in all aspects of education. They are encouraged to achieve, whatever their ability, and become confident in their abilities and personal achievements.  
The requirements of the National Curriculum are taken into consideration as far as possible and that pupils proceed through the examination system appropriate to their abilities and needs. No one is disadvantaged educationally, and that education provision is a continuous process.
4. **Making a positive contribution:** all pupils see the celebration of achievement and are encouraged to make a positive contribution to their education through personal views and opinions.  
All pupils are taught the importance of Citizenship and how they can make a meaningful contribution to the community and wider society.
5. **Economic well-being:** all pupils are to develop independence skills through our AQA Unit Awards which can contribute to their personal Pathway Plans.  
When appropriate, the school will offer pupils the opportunity to undertake a specifically designed programme through work experience within local businesses and the community in order to offer activities, work awareness and job opportunities.

## Enrichment

A key part of the teaching and learning at The Beeches Independent School will be carried out through a wide variety of afternoon visits and activities. Each afternoon offers one hour of wider learning through PE, Enrichment and Assembly. One half day per week allows for us to run educational trips and visits. Such trips will include sites of cultural and historical interest as well as more practical visits to shops, local services (e.g. Fire Station, Police Station, the Cathedral etc.) and recreational pursuits including bowling, pitch and putt, fruit picking (followed by jam-making) and time at the seaside.

The school aims to celebrate learning with parents, carers and other stakeholders such as social workers. We invite people into the school to view the students' work, enjoy performances and to raise money for charities through enterprise.

PHSE and Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural education are delivered through the curriculum areas and through the assembly programme. Students are exposed to many opportunities to learn about the world around them through classroom activities, collapsed days, assembly topics and through trips and visits to local places of interest and worship.

Young people's achievements are celebrated regularly through classroom displays, presentations and culture events. We have high expectations of our students in all areas of their lives. We celebrate their achievements and progress in a multitude of ways within both education and residential departments on a daily and weekly basis. This can take the form of verbal or written praise, tokens awarded for the reward system, certificates and personally chosen rewards. Parents and carers are also welcomed into the school formally and informally to come and speak with teachers and to view their child's progress.

## Curriculum Development

Our subject schemes of work are written specifically for the needs of our pupils using National Curriculum programmes of Study for most subjects. The schemes are underpinned by Cornerstones, an online system of thematic learning, although our school staff differentiate accordingly to include a more sensory approach to learning where possible. Students' progress is constantly monitored through a programme of continuous assessment, both formative and summative. Teachers develop assessment where evidence is moderated each half term to form robust judgements about standards of achievement for each pupil in each subject. Data is reported formally at three points in the year to form our assessment process. Data and information can also be sought from staff when necessary for the compilation of education reports to reflect on progress for external agencies and stakeholders.

Changes to the curriculum will be made to satisfy the needs of our students as the nature and level of their impairments will affect the way lessons are delivered. Students may be taught individually or as part of a small group to suit their individual needs, which may vary from one subject area to another and from one activity to another. Whilst structure and consistency are vital in a teaching and learning environment, so too is the ability to adapt to meet specific needs and offer the best possible learning opportunities to all our pupils.

## Responsibilities and Roles

The Head of Education has overall responsibility for the Curriculum and overseeing the delivery of the Creative Curriculum through:

- Regular formal and informal discussions with staff
- Monitoring planning to ensure curriculum coverage
- Observing learning and teaching to ensure progress is being made within the topics
- Regular reviews of the curriculum through regular open dialogue with staff and pupils
- Making changes where necessary
- Formulating an action plan to move the school forward
- Seeking the students' views about their learning experiences

All teaching staff are responsible for the planning and delivery of the curriculum on a day-to-day basis and for making cross-curricular links where appropriate. Staff must make amendments to planning in order to optimise learning opportunities when they arise.

Management and allocation of resources as well as whole school curriculum enrichment opportunities are the responsibility of the Head of Education.

## Inclusion

The Beeches Independent School offers an holistic approach to education and development, offering a wide variety of teaching methods and practices to appeal to our students' diverse learning needs.

Through specific initial assessment and careful monitoring of each student's abilities and needs, staff are able to remove barriers which may otherwise prevent achievement. By achieving a close understanding of each student's ability, suitable learning challenges may be set and progress achieved, recognised and rewarded.

The Beeches Independent School offers a safe and secure environment where each pupil is made to feel valued and is encouraged to participate as fully as possible.

By encouraging our pupils to play a full and active role in the community of the school, and also the local community, it is hoped that they develop a feeling of being a part of what is going on surrounding them. This will help them to integrate more easily when moving on into adult life.

## Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and review takes place on a daily basis and any necessary adaptations are made to address immediate concerns or issues. The curriculum will be reviewed half termly on completion of schemes of work and the Head of Education will review planning from subject teachers in order to monitor the quality, level and suitability of work planned for the half term ahead. Reviews of the curriculum will also be made in response to new legislation or, in particular Key Stage 4/5, should new opportunities for certification or accreditation be made available.

## Curriculum Review

Monitoring takes place on a termly basis in line with the whole school monitoring and lesson observations where applicable. Should the need arise to accommodate an existing student's developing needs, or indeed those of a new student then an immediate review will take place.