



Teaching & Learning Policy

Introduction

At The Beeches Independent School, we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the idea that both adults and young people learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; knowledge and experiences can be consolidated by a range of appealing and fun experiences. Through our teaching we equip young people with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help young people to lead happy and rewarding lives and can contribute to each of our students becoming an active citizen.

Aims & Objectives

We believe that people learn best in different ways. We provide rich and varied learning experiences which allow young people to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential, whatever their preferred learning style.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable young people to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- foster young people's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- develop self-respect and encourage young people to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- help young people grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

Approaches used to teach children with Autism spectrum disorders

The Beeches uses a wide range of tools, strategies and resources when making educational provision for students with ASD and when providing support for them in school.

Approaches used include:

- visual communications systems, including daily timetable and routines
- sensory provision / play therapy
- video interaction guidance
- social stories

In delivering these approaches, education staff at The Beeches work closely with a number of other agencies and specialists including Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists.

The Beeches believes very much in a child- centred approach to Teaching and Learning; we will therefore incorporate a wide variety of methods of intervention to provide the best possible outcomes for each individual student across the curriculum. Many students with ASD display spiky educational profiles and for this reason teaching methods may vary for a student dependent upon the area of study or type of activity.

Research shows that no one specific approach to intervention brings greater benefit across the spectrum, or that any sub-group of children benefits from any one particular intervention. Through close monitoring of a student's progress in each area of learning, teachers will identify the types of intervention which are most beneficial and adapt their methods of teaching to best suit each child.

Learning and teaching programmes for autism spectrum disorders should address the needs that arise from ongoing assessment of the student in his or her learning environments. Their programme of study should also take account of the student's broader learning needs and the associated difficulties which can co-exist with autism spectrum disorders. No one 'recipe' will provide the correct approach for all students in all situations. Training is provided for staff at The Beeches to help them to have a clear understanding of autism spectrum disorders and of the importance of meeting all the learning needs of an individual student.

Effective Learning

We acknowledge that people learn in differing ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all young people to use their preferred learning style.

We offer opportunities for young people to learn in different ways.

These include:

- investigation and problem solving
- research and enquiry
- small group work
- pair work

- independent work
- asking and answering questions
- use of the computer
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- creative activities
- watching television and responding to musical or tape-recorded material
- debates, role-plays and oral presentations
- designing and making things
- participation in athletic or physical activity

We encourage young people to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as

possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn regularly with what helps them learn and what may prove to be a barrier to their learning.

Effective Teaching

When teaching we focus on motivating the young people by encouraging and developing their communication and other skills, whilst building on their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. We base our teaching on our knowledge of the young people's level of attainment. Our prime focus is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the young people. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each young person's level of ability. When planning work for young people with special educational needs we give due regard to information and targets contained in the young person's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and those which arise from PEP and EHCP. We have high expectations of all young people, and we believe that their work at our school should reflect their very best effort.

We set academic and learning based targets for and with the young people, and we share the progress of these targets with them. We review the progress of each young person termly as a minimum and set revised targets.

At The Beeches, our staff make a concerted effort to establish good working relationships with all young people. We treat the young people with kindness and respect; we treat them fairly and give them equal opportunity to take part in all activities. Our Education staff follow the company policy with regard to discipline and behaviour management. We praise young people for their efforts and, by so doing, we help to build positive attitudes towards learning in general. We insist on good order and behaviour at all times. When young people's behaviour fails to meet our expectations, we follow the guidelines for sanctions as outlined in our behaviour policy. Students also have access to information on suggested sanctions to enable them to make good choices.

We ensure that all tasks and activities that the young people do are safe. When we plan to take young people out, we undertake a risk assessment in conjunction with the care staff using knowledge gained in the residential setting.

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments; we regularly change displays to ensure that the room reflects the topics studied by the young people. We ensure that all young people have the opportunity to display their best work at some time. We have a range of dictionaries and/or thesauruses and access to both fiction and non-fiction books. A stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and we believe that we provide an exciting educational environment which promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the young people.

Our Staff reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and plan their professional development needs accordingly. We do all we can to support our Staff in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice. We conduct all our teaching in an atmosphere of trust and respect for all.

The role of support workers and social workers

We believe that support workers and social workers have a fundamental role to play in helping young people to learn.

We do all we can to inform the care workers and social workers about what and how their young people are learning by:

- care staff working alongside students in the classroom as TA's supporting their learning and

assisting in behavioural support.

- giving information to residential support workers and social workers frequently where we outline the topics that the young people will be studying during that period.

- providing weekly reports to residential support workers, parents and social workers in which we

explain the progress made by each young person and indicate how the young person can improve further.

- explaining to residential support workers and social workers how they can support their young

people with home learning tasks. We suggest, for example, regular shared reading and support

for young people with their AQA unit award projects and other investigative work.

We believe that residential support workers, parents and social workers have the responsibility to support their young people and in implementing policies.

We would like residential support workers and social workers to:

- ensure that their young person has the best attendance possible
- ensure that their young person is equipped for education and make necessary suggestions to enable the student to overcome any educational barriers.

- do their best to keep their young person healthy and fit to attend education
- inform the teacher if there are matters that are likely to affect the young person's performance or behaviour
- promote a positive attitude towards education and learning in general

Monitoring & Review

We are aware of the need to review the teaching and learning policy regularly so that we can take account of any new students' educational needs, new initiatives, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology etc. We will review our policy annually.