

Beacon Hill Academy

Curriculum Policy



Beacon Hill Academy has developed its own personalised curriculum model "Beacon Hill Adventures Curriculum" which sits alongside our Learning adventure assessment information model.

Context and rationale

Beacon Hill Academy caters for pupils aged 2-19 with severe and complex learning difficulties but not those with a primary diagnosis of ASD. The needs of pupils within the school has changed significantly and the majority of students can now be described as having Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties. There are an increasing number of pupils applying for places who live outside of Thurrock, whose parents are choosing Beacon Hill as it caters predominantly for this cohort.

The staff team at Beacon Hill are extremely skilled and committed at working with PMLD students and there is a huge level of shared expertise.

Pupils with PMLD can be defined as having: -

"Profound and multiple learning difficulties as well as complex learning needs. In addition to very severe learning difficulties, pupils have other significant difficulties, such as physical disabilities, sensory impairment or a severe medical condition. Pupils require a high level of adult support, both for their learning needs and also for their personal care. They are likely to need sensory stimulation and a curriculum broken down into very small steps. Some pupils communicate by gesture, eye pointing or symbols, others by very simple language." The Salt Review 2010.

In designing and shaping the curriculum for pupils at Beacon Hill it is recognised that all of our pupils have unique abilities and ways of learning. There is no one set curriculum pathway that will work for all and many of our students will be making linear progress which could be intermittent or working to maintain skills.

We have therefore designed this framework to be completely personalised and focus on the holistic needs of each individual.

We believe that every part of the pupils' day should be seen as an opportunity for learning, whilst respecting the importance for breaks and rest periods within this.

We aim to offer each pupil a broad and balanced curriculum that is matched to their individual needs. We believe that our pupils learn by supporting and developing their strengths and abilities through engagement with the world around them including social interactions and relationships. Our curriculum is delivered in a completely integrated approach. Therapy and both physical and emotional health needs form part of learning, and learning takes place in a wide range of different settings. Everything that happens throughout the pupils' day is important.

Communication underpins the curriculum for all of our students and for the majority of them their personalised curriculum will be delivered in a very sensory based way.

Aims:

- The Adventures Curriculum at Beacon Hill Academy:
- Is personalised and pupil led using their interests
- Provides safe opportunities for pupils to excel with high aspirations for all
- Provides a range of age appropriate, meaningful and exciting opportunities to develop pupils' strengths and functional skills from early years through to Post 16 and into adult life
- Provides an immersive, holistic, physical, multi-sensory approach to meet all learners' needs
- Involves a total communication approach to ensure the highest levels of engagement and achievement
- Is outward looking giving student's confidence, making them ready to embrace the world around them
- Encourages all staff to work closely with other professionals, parents, multi agencies and the local community to ensure learning is a continuous process
- Encourages all stakeholders to be as creative as possible in meeting the needs of all current and future learners
- Is fun and exciting!

Organisation and Delivery model:

The design of personalised learning for each pupil starts from the content and needs identified within their Education, Care and Health Plan. At Beacon Hill, this process is well supported by families, health and social care providers and includes input from everyone who works with and is important to the pupil. The objectives identified from this are used to plot each students "Learning Adventure" and this, alongside progress meeting information forms the basis of the schools assessment information process.

Teachers will produce an Adventure Plan for each pupil per term which shows the areas of coverage, personalised to each pupil. The individual Adventure Plans form the basis for teachers termly planning.

In planning the content of each day, there will be different approaches in each department of the school but all teachers will ensure that the individual curriculum offer to each learner is broad and balanced. Where areas of the school follow topics, topic based curriculum plans and other resources will be used to identify individual content and contexts.

The delivery of teaching will include either Skills Based or Process Based Learning or a mixture of both. The offer will have high ambitions for each pupil.

Skills based learning is where there is much repetition and practice and once acquired we would be looking for transference to other relevant situations. For our pupils this could cover skills such as eating or drinking, stimuli responses, tracking, contingency response and awareness. Process based learning will be a more holistic approach where the process of the teaching becomes the objective such as Intensive Interaction.

We recognise that with our cohort of pupils it is not always possible to remain within the boundaries of SMART targets and so the support of Routes for Learning guidance and the SCRUFFY target approach promoted by Penny Lacey (2010) will also be used to support the needs of this group:-

Student led, Creative, Relevant, Unspecified, Fun, For Youngsters

There is an acknowledgement that for some of our pupils there will be a level of expected learning and others will be focusing on maintaining skills.

Learning for the majority of our pupils will also be linked to the Lens of Engagement developed from the Rochford Review.

All staff, including those who are provided to support additional complex medical needs will understand the thinking behind the holistic curriculum and meeting medical needs will form part of the students learning.

The delivery style will vary as the pupils go through the different areas of the school

Beacon Hill Academy is divided into 4 distinct age based departments - Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Post 16.

The curriculum and delivery change in each team to reflect pupils progressing into different areas of the school, however the learning is personalised in all departments to meet each pupils' individual needs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Beacon Hill has an assessment nursery offering part time, full time and split placement places for children from the age of 2 1/2.

Stay and play sessions are initially offered, where parents are invited to join their child for their first few sessions whilst we get to know them.

New children are offered 2-3 sessions. These can be morning/afternoon sessions or a combination of both. The number of sessions will vary depending on individual need and will increase as they become more settled and confident.

The early years curriculum is immersive, play based and individualised for each child. Learning is fun and messy!

The roots of our curriculum diagram shows through which each individual child grows.

Each child then has their own curriculum map with varied content and targets set against our five colour coded areas of learning: -

- Physical - On the Move
- Me - Inside and out
- Creative and sensory
- My Voice - communication and Interaction
- My World

The content of these areas provides pupils with a holistic curriculum and allows us to focus on what is most important for each pupil. We provide meaningful experiences through topic based activities, the topics are linked to the children's interests. Our learning takes place in a range of environments both inside and outside the classroom.

We work closely with multi-disciplinary teams to ensure an integrated approach embedding all therapy programmes into the child's day. We work towards

personalised targets that are important to the child and their families. We develop confidence and encourage independence.

Weekly focused activity plans show how the content is linked into the curriculum areas and which skills each pupil is working on.

Primary curriculum

Children usually move into the Primary team either in Reception or Year 1, depending on what is appropriate to their needs. Most of the learning is class based and the primary classes are roughly grouped into similar learning needs.

The primary children follow a topic based curriculum and each pupil has an individual learning adventure plan each term, broken down against the 5 primary curriculum learning areas which are: -

- Communication and Interaction
- Wellbeing and Independence
- Physical
- Creative and Sensory
- Exploring and understanding the world

Content is planned for each pupil's adventure using and expanding on the ideas in the topic plans, making sure that it is personalised and relevant to each individual student.

Secondary curriculum

When they complete year 6 in primary, pupils move into the Secondary team in the school.

Pupils are grouped into base groups but there are lots more opportunities for students to choose activities that they are more interested in and to learn in mixed groups across the Key Stages.

They become familiar with a wider range of staff and peers and there is a greater emphasis on learning beyond the classroom.

All pupils complete the Asdan New Horizons course at the end of KS3 and pupils begin to link into Post 16 for 2 days a week when they reach year 10. Some pupils may move on full time to Post 16 either in or during year 11.

In year 10 pupils begin a personalised accreditation route and aim to complete an award sized qualification at the end of year 11, this is currently delivered using the Asdan Personal Progress qualification.

Each Secondary pupil has a personalised adventure plan which is based on the Secondary team 4 areas of learning: -

- Communication and Interaction
- Physical and Sensory
- Personal Development
- Exploring and understanding the world

Secondary pupils continue to follow a topic based curriculum, but this is on a three year cycle, with those in year 10 and 11 revisiting previous topics but accessing them at a different level with new content.

Post 16 curriculum

Beacon Hill Post 16 Unit is located on a separate site in Grays. Pupils begin to link for 2 days a week in year and will move to Post 16 full time by the end of year 11.

The focus of learning changes significantly to look at preparation for adult life. We work extremely closely with partners who provide opportunities for students beyond school.

All of the Post 16 and KS4 students spend one day a week linking into activities which are sustainable beyond school. They are encouraged to try a variety of different things and identify their preferences so that post school options can be designed to meet individual need.

Most of the learning on the Post 16 site takes place in much smaller groups or could be individual. It could be led by a teaching assistant, HLTA or teacher. Families are supported to prepare for adulthood, including understanding how services change and the implications of the mental capacity act.

The curriculum is divided into 4 areas: -

- Physical and Movement
- Relationships and the community
- Independence and transition
- Wellbeing and sensory

Communication underpins all areas

Further details on curriculum content can be found in the Beacon Hill Adventures curriculum handbook.