



THE BEACON

Curriculum Policy

Review cycle: Every 2 years
Review by: A-Team, G(Ed), G(Board)

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Policies linked to:

- Policy Statement for Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Games Policy
- Policy on Class Size
- Behaviour Policy
- Homework Policy
- Policy on Social Spiritual Moral and Cultural (SMSC) aspects of a child's education
- Sex Education policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Early Years General Policy

This document also appears on:

- Staff Intranet
- School Website

THIS POLICY ALSO RELATES TO EARLY YEARS

Policy

The curriculum, in its fullest sense, firmly underpins our values and aims as defined in our prospectus. The school is committed to ensuring that the curriculum is broad and balanced, in order that the needs of all children and of different abilities, across the age range, are provided for. Whatever their abilities and talents, secure foundations are laid for their future in education and beyond. All pupils gain experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. We believe that intelligence is multi-faceted and children learn in different ways; the curriculum supports this.

Our broad, comprehensive curriculum develops pupils' knowledge, skills and talents and enables them to become reflective, problem-solving, independent learners. We aim for the curriculum to maximise progress and prepare pupils for the next stage of their learning as well as preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in British society.

The curriculum aims to ensure coherence in pupils' learning across the school in order to encourage high achievement. Continuity and progression through successive phases of education are ensured through curriculum planning that is monitored regularly by senior managers to ensure consistency in quality.

The school emphasises equality of access to the curriculum, and all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress. Pupils are presented with the same knowledge and skills for each subject, but at levels and in ways appropriate to their needs. Where required, across the age range a variety of differing teaching and learning methods and materials are used to suit pupils' different needs and abilities. Pupils with learning difficulties receive extra support within class as appropriate, whilst more able pupils enrich their learning through extension tasks.

The curriculum not only includes subject specific and cross-curricular learning experiences, but also promotes spiritual, moral, cultural and social education through mutual respect and behavioural expectations. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) and Self & Society (SaS) are designed to develop pupils' self-understanding, emotional intelligence and personal and social wellbeing at every stage of the school. The curriculum encompasses a wide range of activities and visits that enhance and enrich pupils' learning.

The curriculum is designed to offer variety, strong embedding of learning and to encompass a range of interests and abilities. It develops character and offers breadth of opportunity. Teaching is designed to produce creative, thoughtful, thinking young people with 'flexible' intelligence.

Access to the curriculum is regardless of race, disability, religion or belief. In accordance with The Equality Act 2019, The Children and Families Act 2014 and The

SEN and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years 2015, the school aims to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils as far as is reasonably practicable. The school has an Accessibility Plan which is available to parents on request.

The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school is forbidden by law. Political issues are introduced in a number of courses and are presented in a balanced manner. For further detail please refer to the school's policy for SMSC.

The school's values are clearly defined and are woven into the curriculum using the Core Learning Skills throughout the school. They underpin the school's aim to prepare children as positive contributors when they join the adult world.

This policy will be monitored through The Academic Team, Heads of Department and by the Senior Deputy Head, who will report to the Head on its implementation on a regular basis. The Head will report to the governing body's Education Committee on the progress of the policy and will recommend any changes.

Parents who have concerns about any aspect of the curriculum should discuss these in the first instance with the pupil's tutor. The Deputy Head Academic is always available to answer queries.

Aims

Through its curriculum The Beacon aims to:

- promote a love of learning and develop intellectual curiosity
- ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress
- build upon, extend and expand the National Curriculum offering breadth, balance and relevance, allowing flexibility for individual talents and aptitudes
- develop the key skills of Communication (speaking, listening and writing), Numeracy, Literacy and IT at all stages and across all curriculum areas
- promote skills through the Core Learning Skills:
 1. I am an independent thinker and learner
 2. I cooperate and work hard when doing group work
 3. I set a good example in my thinking and learning
 4. I am a reflective learner
 5. I work with others to make improvements
 6. I take a lead to help improve group work
 7. I am a good communicator
 8. I listen respectfully and respond sensitively when working with others
 9. I inspire others by my actions and words

- provide subject material appropriate for the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an Education Health Care plan and to review schemes of work regularly to ensure they meet the needs of all pupils
- develop lively, enquiring minds through well-planned lessons that provide stimulating, challenging and purposeful learning experiences
- extend pupils' learning experience through a wide range of visits and extensive range of extra-curricular activities
- ensure that within every curriculum area the fundamental British values of democracy are not undermined and that mutual respect and tolerance are evident for the rule of law, individual liberty and for the differences that exist between those of different faiths and beliefs. (See SMSC policy for more information)
- prepare pupils, at levels appropriate to their ages, to contribute to society as responsible citizens
- raise pupils' awareness, at levels appropriate to their ages and stages of development, of eSafety issues, of political indoctrination, of grooming and of sexual abuse
- provide pupils a safe environment to explore and discuss their own personal development, receiving guidance and teaching on physical and emotional maturity, health and wellbeing and relationships
- celebrate pupils' achievements and success through a variety of school activities, performance and displays and by individual commendation.
- monitor, evaluate and act upon the quality of the planning, delivery and consistency of provision of the formal curriculum.

Curriculum

The Beacon aims to provide an inspiring curriculum and cross-curricular opportunities where appropriate. The curriculum provides experience in the following areas:

Linguistic

English is allocated significant time in all year groups, starting with the Read, Write, Inc. programme in Reception. Linguistics is also taught through International Studies, French, Spanish and Performing Arts. Communication skills are encouraged in all subject areas with opportunities to discuss, express opinions and present to teachers and/or peers in a variety of formats. Much focus is given to the Core Learning Skills.

The main school Library, deliberately located at the heart of the school, is a popular and well-used facility. Pupils have timetabled time with the Librarian and are allowed to visit the Library in their own time which many do regularly. The Library is not just about books (important though they are) – some clubs meet in the Library and it also acts as a technology hub from which laptops and tablet devices can be borrowed. It has a separate breakout room for small group work.

In Reception, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Communication, Language and Literacy form two of the seven strands for learning which are integral to the planning of activities.

Mathematical

Mathematics as a discrete subject is allocated significant time to all year groups. Mathematics is experienced through various activities within the Science, Geography, Design and Technology, Cooking and Nutrition and SaS curriculum. Where appropriate this includes economic education.

In Reception, Mathematics forms one of the seven strands for learning which are integral to the planning of activities.

Scientific

Science is taught as a discrete subject from Year 1. Cross-curricular opportunities arise with Mathematics, Geography, Physical Education, Cooking and Nutrition and SaS. Sustainable Education is promoted through the Science curriculum.

In Reception, Science is taught as part of the Understanding of the World strand for learning which is integral to the planning of activities.

Technological

IT/Computing is taught throughout the school with pupils able to use a variety of devices. Design and Technology, Art and Music use IT as an integral part of their curriculum. Other subjects provide opportunities for pupils to use technology and several areas of the curriculum are increasingly delivered using Microsoft Teams and similar technologies.

In Reception, technology is used in a variety of curriculum areas with pupils given opportunities to use interactive applications.

Human and social

Science, Geography, History, SaS and PSHEE provide the formal elements of human and social education. The Beacon's five Values are integral to our teaching and learning: Well-being, Integrity, Courage, Respect and Achievement.

All pupils up to Year 8 attend a variety of assemblies e.g. school, section and house assemblies. These are of a broadly Christian character, but are not distinctive of a particular Christian denomination and can involve visitors, groups of children, musical contributions and the award of commendations and medals etc.

In addition to the work covered in their SaS and PSHEE lessons, pupils are prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society through

programmes such as mentoring (in which Y8 pupils mentor younger pupils), House Captains and Heads of School, sports captains, Junior Lab Technicians and Eco-Council. Further, there are two School Councils: one in Pre-Prep and one for Years 3-8. Class/form representatives take opinions from their classes and meet regularly to discuss matters arising from a pupil's perspective. Pupils choose the charitable causes to support and suggest ways of raising money. Links are maintained with local and international organisations with guest speakers attending assemblies or classes.

In all our curriculum areas we strive to ensure pupils' are presented with a range of views, no specific views are promoted and on no occasion are pupils influenced by staff on specific political points of view.

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) takes place in the Pre Prep and Lower School. These sessions promote team building, appreciating the environment and reflect the Beacon Values.

Physical

The Beacon runs a "sports for all" policy. All pupils are expected to take part in the school's Physical Education (PE) and Games programme. Pupils can only be excused from PE and Games lessons for medical reasons, for which a note from a parent will suffice, or other reasons agreed with the school.

In Reception, speed, agility and quickness (SAQ) as well as control and coordination are key skills taught in the Physical Development strand for learning.

Aesthetic and creative education

Art, Design Technology (including Cooking and Nutrition), Drama and Music are all taught as discrete subjects (DT from Year 4). All of these subjects introduce pupils to a variety of mediums and genres. In the Upper School, Drama and Music merge to form a Performing Arts curriculum for the Prep School Baccalaureate (PSB), our two year programme leading to senior school transfer at the end of Year 8.

Reception follow a programme of Expressive Arts and Design. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to be creative, imaginative and are encouraged go with their own interests.

Planning

The Early Years adhere to the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2025).

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two sections – prime and specific;

however, all the sections are interconnected and important.

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language
 - Listening, attention and understanding
 - Speaking
- Physical development
 - Gross motor skills
 - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development
 - Self-regulation
 - Managing self
 - Building relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy
 - Comprehension
 - Word reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics
 - Numbers
 - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world
 - Past and present
 - People, culture and communities
 - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design
 - Creating with materials
 - Being imaginative and expressive

Planning is co-ordinated by the Head of Early Years.

For Years 1-6 the curriculum is devised by the Heads of Department and subject teachers with due heed paid to the National Curriculum in literacy, numeracy, science and computing. Planning is co-ordinated by the Assistant Heads and Heads of Department.

For Years 7 and 8 the curriculum is devised by the Heads of Department with due heed paid to the entry requirements of senior schools to which our pupils transfer. Planning is co-ordinated by the Heads of Department.

All curriculum plans throughout the school are overseen by the Senior Deputy Head.

Planning takes the form of:

- Long-term plans or Schemes of work offering an overview of topic areas available for parents on the school Portal.
- Medium-term plans which are uploaded termly on the school's intranet. These show week by week progression through topics giving detailed learning objectives and subject content, support and extension needs/tasks, core learning skills, assessment and resources.
- Short-term plans are kept by each individual teacher in a format suitable to them: planner (provided by the school) or electronic versions. These provide a breakdown of the medium-term plans lesson by lesson.

The allocation of lessons and staffing are reviewed and adapted at least annually.

Special Educational Needs

We recognise and celebrate the fact that every child is unique with differing academic needs and the school aims to support each pupil to realise their best. We aim to meet Special Educational Needs through differentiation, quality first teaching, setting and individual lessons (if appropriate and at a charge to parents). Teachers work closely with colleagues in the Learning Support Centre to ensure needs are identified and appropriately catered for in planning and classroom practices.

The Learning Support Centre (LSC) will advise on individual needs for pupils who have English as An Additional Language.

Throughout the school where a pupil has an Education and Health Care plan (EHCP), we aim to provide an education which fulfils those requirements. If a pupil has an EHCP, the plan will be reviewed annually by either the school and/or the Local Authority. The school needs to see the EHCP of any prospective pupils, to be sure we can meet the needs specified in the plan.

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and Learning Support Centre staff support staff in identifying pupils' difficulties and devising suitable teaching strategies and materials. If appropriate, pupils will be provided with an individual plan to record the provision in place for them and monitor their progress. The Co-ordinator liaises with parents and outside agencies to coordinate any extra help that may be required.

Equal Opportunities

We believe all pupils in the school should have equal access to the curriculum enabling all to learn, make progress and fulfil their potential.

Current Highly Achieving Pupils

We monitor pupils carefully throughout the school to identify Current High Achieving Pupils (CHAPS) in all areas of the curriculum. Their individual needs are provided for

through a variety of activities and teaching methods. In some cases pupils will join other year groups for some lessons where appropriate. Additional specialist support is offered in Music and Drama. Pupils identified as being a Currently Highly Achieving Pupil are often given opportunities to go on external enrichment visits, e.g. Critical Thinking sessions, Creative Thinking Days, Creative Writing workshops and Academic Scholarship Activity Days at senior schools.

Assessment

Assessment of pupils throughout the school is ongoing, with a range of standardised and internal tests used throughout the year to provide snapshots of individual achievement and to inform future planning and to give targets to pupils.

At the beginning of Year 3 all pupils undertake a word reading test which can indicate a specific learning difficulty. In liaison with the LSC appropriate measures can be taken. National Group Reading tests provide reading ages for all year groups with testing taking place in the autumn term for years 2-8.

Parents sometimes ask for pupils' exam papers to be sent home. Our practice is not to send exam papers home in cases where we intend to reuse the papers in the future. The Beacon is not unusual in this respect (similarly, it is not uncommon for senior schools not to publish sample papers for entrance exams). However, teachers are of course willing to provide feedback when parents request it.

Please refer to the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy for further detailed information.

In addition to formal assessment teachers use evidence from the classroom to reflect on pupils' performance and progress the efficacy of their teaching. Meaningful feedback is given to pupils to engage them in their learning and to help them identify ways in which to improve.

The Beacon is a Partner School and test centre for the Buckinghamshire 11+ entry into state grammar school.

Enrichment

School productions, class playlets and poetry events are arranged annually for every year group. These are linked to and reinforce the curriculum, many providing cross-curricular opportunities. Cross-curricular residential trips are arranged from Years 4 to 8.

Visits to theatres, museums and other places of historical, geographical and spiritual interest and visits to school by specialists complement the curriculum at strategic points. Visits by locally elected representatives help pupils in the Upper School develop their role as citizens and an understanding of democracy in the UK reflecting the school's aim to foster fundamental British Values as part of our SMSC.

The school has a wide and varied programme of sporting activities that take place outside the formal curriculum. All pupils are encouraged to take part in the programme.

Extra-curricular Activities

Music and Drama are curriculum subjects for all pupils. These are supplemented through the Clubs programme.

Pupils in the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools are encouraged to join extra-curricular clubs, which include Writers' Club from Year 7 to 8, music (choir, orchestra, wind and string groups), art, drama (club and school play), drawing club, chess, board games, IT, STEM and a wide variety of sports clubs. Individual music and LAMDA tuition are expenses borne by the parent. The school choirs, Young Voices and Beacon Voices, are very popular.

Matches are played against many schools in a range of sports; the majority of pupils have represented the school. The Beacon prides itself on its sport for all policy.

The school has a wide and varied programme of sporting and cultural activities that take place outside the formal curriculum. All pupils are encouraged to take part in the programme.

Pre-Prep: Early Years (Nursery and Reception)

Please visit the Early Years General policy for information on learning and development, assessment and learning environment.

Pre-Prep: Years 1 and 2

There are two or three parallel classes in each year group in Years 1 and 2.

The curriculum in each year group includes programmes of study for English, Mathematics, Science, Topic, Self and Society (SaS), Art, Design Technology, PSHEE and citizenship, Music, Drama, PE, IT and International Studies (in Year 2). These are age-appropriate, tailor-made programmes to suit the pupils, taking into consideration the guidelines and the standards of the National Curriculum for English, Mathematics and Science. Planning takes into account the range of abilities and achievements with a variety of activities and teaching methods. Much of the morning sessions are taken up with English and Mathematics, with a more cross-curricular approach in the afternoons. Where appropriate, emphasis is given to the key skills of literacy, numeracy and IT within all subjects.

PSHEE and citizenship are embedded throughout the curriculum and weekly Circle Time sessions held in each class give the pupils an opportunity to explore any issues that have

arisen. A series of assemblies, given by the Head of Pre-Prep throughout the year, also provide the pupils with relevant information and examples that support the PSHEE and citizenship themes that reflect the school's aims and ethos, encourage mutual respect and prepare pupils for life in British society.

Pupils learn IT skills and have access to computers or portable devices. IT is taught by a specialist IT teacher, as are PE, Games, Music and International Studies. All other subjects are taught by the class teacher. Some pupils in Year 2 have an opportunity to take individual music tuition.

Prep is kept to a minimum in the Pre-Prep and it is not more than 10 minutes per day. This usually consists of a pupil reading the set reading book aloud. In addition, Years 1 and 2 pupils are given spellings to learn for their weekly test and Maths once a week.

Lower School: Years 3 and 4

There are three or four classes in each year group in Years 3 and 4.

The curriculum in each year group includes programmes of study for English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, SaS, Art, Design Technology, PSHEE, Music, Drama, PE and Games, Computing, Cooking & Nutrition (Year 4), International Studies (Year 3) and French and Spanish (Year 4). As in the Pre-Prep, these are age-appropriate programmes to suit the pupils, taking into consideration the guidelines and the standards of the National Curriculum for English, Mathematics and Science. Planning takes into account the range of abilities and achievements with a variety of activities and teaching methods. Within the constraints of the timetable, we aim to teach the core subjects of Maths and English in the morning although this is not always possible. Maths is set from the beginning of Year 4. Where appropriate, emphasis is given to the key skills of literacy, numeracy and IT within all subjects.

PSHEE and citizenship are embedded throughout the curriculum. There is a discrete programme of study; this is followed with a degree of flexibility to allow time to explore any issues that have arisen. A fortnightly assembly, usually given by the Head of Lower School, takes place throughout the year. As in the Pre-Prep this aims to support the PSHEE and citizenship themes that reflect the school's aims and ethos, encourage mutual respect and prepare pupils for life in British society.

Pupils continue to develop their IT skills and have access to computers or portable devices. IT is taught by a specialist IT teacher, as are PE, Games, Music, International Studies, Art, Drama and, from Year 4, DT. All other subjects are taught by Lower School form teachers. Many pupils in the Lower School have individual music tuition.

Year 3 pupils are given daily reading, weekly spellings, English or Maths and an additional Maths skills prep every week.

Year 4 pupils are given daily reading, weekly spellings, an English, a Maths and an additional Maths skills prep every week.

Middle School: Years 5 and 6

There are four mixed ability teaching classes in each year group in Years 5 and 6. Classes are set across the whole year group for Mathematics and in Year 6 English is partially set with two upper and two lower groups.

The curriculum in each year group includes programmes of study for English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, SaS, Art, Design Technology, PSHEE, Music, Drama, PE and Games, IT, French, Spanish and Classics (in Year 6). These are normally taught by subject specialists and are age-appropriate programmes to suit the pupils, taking into consideration the guidelines and the standards of the National Curriculum for English, Mathematics and Science. Planning takes into account the range of abilities and achievements with a variety of activities and teaching methods. Within the constraints of the timetable we aim to teach the core subjects of Maths and English in the morning as far as is possible. Speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills are developed across the curriculum and co-curriculum through consistent marking schemes, discussion of cross-curricular links, performing and creative arts projects, trips and clubs.

PSHEE and citizenship are embedded throughout the curriculum. The programme of study is followed with a degree of flexibility to allow time to explore any issues that have arisen. A weekly assembly, usually given by the Head of Middle School, takes place throughout the year. This aims to support the PSHEE and citizenship themes that reflect the school's aims and ethos, encourage mutual respect and prepare pupils for life in British society.

Prep is set every night except Wednesdays. Year 5 pupils are given one session a night: two English, one Maths and one French/Spanish. Year 6 pupils are given one session a night: English, Maths, Science, MFL vocabulary learning and RS and an occasional Classics or Drama. Each session should last approximately 30 minutes.

Upper School: Years 7 and 8

The Upper School comprises Years 7 and 8. In Years 7 and 8 the year group is streamed, usually into two or three teaching groups, typically one top and two parallel groups although this depends on the ability composition of the cohort. Pupils are placed in mixed ability tutor groups. The timetable allows for setting in English, Maths and French/Spanish and Science. The timetabled subjects are Maths, English, French/Spanish, Science, History, Geography, Classics and Latin, SaS, Art, DT (including Cooking and Nutrition), Music, Drama, PSHEE, IT (in Year 7), PE, and Games. Pupils are taught by specialist teachers in all subjects. This broad-based curriculum, with setting across the academic range, gives all pupils the opportunity to learn and make progress, with extension and support provided, in consultation with the LSC, where appropriate.

Speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills are developed across the curriculum and co-curriculum and in the smaller classes of the Upper School additional emphasis is placed on communication and presentation skills.

Prep is set every night except Wednesdays. Each session should last approximately 30 minutes but there is an understanding that, in Years 7 and 8, more might be expected as assessments and examinations approach. Year 7 and 8 pupils are given two sessions a night, one each of English, Maths, Science, French/Spanish, Classics, History, Geography and SaS plus an occasional Drama.

Pupils are prepared for a wide variety of destination schools many of whom have their own unique admissions system. Senior school entry exams at 11+, 13+, Common Entrance (CE), Scholarships and pre-testing are all provided for. The Beacon is a founder member of the Pre-Senior Baccalaureate (PSB), a method of transfer which recognises effort and achievement across the whole school curriculum and includes focus on core learning and research skills. It is acknowledged by most of the schools we currently transfer to but some may require the pupils to complete their own entrance exams or Common Entrance. When the demands of the syllabus require it, pupils who are preparing for CE or scholarship entry to senior schools are provided with additional sessions as arranged by Heads of Department.

Careers Guidance

At The Beacon we begin to lay the foundations of future career guidance by helping pupils identify their abilities and offering a range of opportunities to broaden their interests through the extra-curricular programme to help encourage them to fulfil their potential. As pupils go through the school so opportunities increase to take on roles of responsibility and leadership: technical assistants in assemblies, Science, Library, DT, Cooking and Nutrition, mentors, monitors, School Council, Heads and Deputy Heads of House and Head and Deputy Head Pupil.

Pupils are prepared for the next stage in their education through discussions about options with subject teachers. Advice is often given when non-academic scholarship options are contemplated, i.e. whether the pupil will be expected to take the subject beyond GCSE. Every pupil receives interview practice. Information and guidance about a variety of career options is offered through talks given by visiting speakers, some of whom may be parents, enabling the pupils to start making informed choices as they go through their senior school education.