



Bracken Hill School

Curriculum Policy

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Policy Type: Whole School

This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure compliance with current regulations

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The Governors of the school recognise that all staff play a vital role in the achievement of high standards and in providing our pupils with the best opportunities matched to their needs.

Context:

Bracken Hill School is a state-funded special school that serves 173 pupils, ranging in age from 4 to 18 years. All students at the school have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), ensuring their individual needs are met. The school is one of 11 special schools in Nottinghamshire and holds the distinction of being the largest in the area.

The pupils are primarily taught in key stage-based classes, covering Foundation Stage 1 through to Year 13. The gender distribution among students is 29% girls and 71% boys. The school caters to a wide spectrum of Special Educational Needs (SEN), which are categorized into Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), and Complex Needs. Specific SEN profiles include Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (SLCN), as well as Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) challenges.

To address the diverse needs of its pupils, Bracken Hill School offers a carefully designed curriculum that incorporates three distinct pathways. These pathways are tailored to provide personalized learning experiences, ensuring that every student can achieve their full potential.

1. Curriculum Intent

At Bracken Hill School our curriculum intent is to enhance knowledge, develop skills and provide enriching experiences that enable our young people to embrace opportunities and be successful in the modern world.

To achieve this, we will:

- Provide a broad, balanced, and inspiring education for all pupils.
- Foster collaborative working with stakeholders, including parents and the community.
- Actively involve the local community in learning experiences.
- Equip staff with specialist skills through ongoing training.
- Incorporate learning opportunities beyond the classroom environment.
- Maintain a safe, engaging, and supportive learning environment.
- Enable pupils to develop and apply knowledge, skills, and understanding in practical contexts.
- Support pupils spiritual, moral, social, and cultural growth.
- Encourage physical development and healthy lifestyle choices.
- Promote a positive attitude toward lifelong learning.
- Ensure equal access to education with high expectations and tailored support for all pupils.

- Aspire to high personal, academic, and vocational outcomes for all pupils.
- Build knowledge and cultural capital for success in life.
- Offer subject choices that align with pupils' aspirations and goals.
- Cultivate independence and resilience to prepare pupils for further education and employment.

2. Organisation and planning

Bracken Hill's curriculum is built on an interconnected approach, with three distinct pathways designed to meet the diverse needs of all learners and support their progression throughout the school. Each pathway fosters resilience, confidence, and emotional regulation, with highly individualised timetables provided where necessary to ensure good progress. The pathways are as follows:

- **Explorers Pathway**
This pathway supports our most complex learners or those with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), focusing on early developmental stages and a multi-sensory, play-based approach modelled on Early Years principles. The curriculum emphasises functional communication and encourages pupils to explore their environment, establish positive relationships, and achieve the highest possible levels of social and independent functioning. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are also assessed using the Engagement Model.
- **Adventurers Pathway**
This pathway serves pupils with Severe or Moderate Learning Difficulties (SLD/MLD) who follow a differentiated National Curriculum. Learning incorporates hands-on, practical activities connected to real-life experiences, with some pupils learning through play and others through functional tasks. Teaching is tailored to each pupil's age and learning style, with cross-curricular opportunities helping pupils embed and retain knowledge.
- **Pioneers Pathway**
This pathway is designed for our most able Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) learners, following a curriculum aligned with the National Curriculum. It provides a clear progression to recognised accreditation and qualifications, while also emphasising life skills and independence for secondary and post-16 students.

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of the school community, offering challenging and engaging pathways for all pupils, regardless of their needs or abilities.

All curriculum pathways cover the following core areas:

- Relationships, health and sex education (RHSE)
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)
- British values
- Careers education and guidance (for pupils in Years 7-13)

To ensure consistency, all subjects include medium- and long-term planning, as well as a termly overview. These overviews are also available to parents via our website.

Resources and External Providers

We provide a wide range of resources to support curriculum delivery for all subject areas. Additionally, external providers enhance pupils' learning experiences, offering opportunities such as:

- Forest Schools
- The Adventure Service
- Music and Movement Therapy
- Draw and Talk Therapy
- Horse Riding
- Play Therapy

For more information on our Early Years curriculum, please refer to our **EYFS policy**.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and holding the headteacher to account for its implementation. It will ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets.
- Sufficient teaching time is allocated for pupils to cover the Curriculum and other statutory requirements.
- The school adheres to relevant statutory assessment arrangements.
- Decisions about the breadth and balance of the curriculum are informed and well-considered.
- Processes to disapply pupils from all or part of the National Curriculum are followed where appropriate, including handling subsequent appeals.
- Independent and impartial careers guidance is provided to pupils from Year 7 onwards, with appropriate resourcing.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy. They will:

- Ensure that all required elements of the curriculum, as well as additional subjects offered by the school, have clear aims and objectives aligned with the school's vision and meet individual pupils' needs.
- Review and allocate adequate teaching time for the curriculum's required elements, in consultation with the governing body.
- Facilitate permanent or temporary disapplication from the National Curriculum for individual pupils, where appropriate.
- Manage and respond to requests for withdrawal from curriculum subjects, in line with legal and school policies.

- Ensure that the school’s assessment procedures comply with all statutory requirements.
- Involve the governing body in decision-making processes related to curriculum breadth, balance, and whole-school targets.
- Advise the governing body on whole-school targets to support informed decision-making.

3.3 Other Staff

All staff are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is implemented effectively and in accordance with this policy.

Curriculum leads will oversee their subject areas by:

- Leading curriculum planning and delivery.
- Ensuring alignment with the Subject Coordinator job description.
- Supporting staff with resources, professional development, and high-quality teaching.

4. Legislation and Guidance

This policy aligns with the statutory requirements outlined in the **National Curriculum** programmes of study, which all maintained schools in England are mandated to deliver. It ensures compliance with the principles of inclusion and equality as outlined in:

- The **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014)**
- The **Equality Act 2010**

Additionally, this policy reflects the curriculum-related responsibilities and expectations placed on governing boards, as detailed in the **Department for Education’s Governance Handbook**.

Furthermore, the policy recognises and upholds the legal obligations set forth in the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework**, which outlines the essential aspects for promoting the learning and development of young children in early years settings.

5. Inclusion

At Bracken Hill School, all pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The school is committed to carefully addressing the needs of all pupils and overcoming potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups, including those with:

- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Particularly high or low prior attainment
- Disadvantaged backgrounds

High Expectations for All

Teachers set high expectations for every pupil, using appropriate assessment tools to establish ambitious targets and plan challenging, engaging work for all groups. This includes:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

For pupils with complex needs, including Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), the school uses the Autism Education Trust (AET) Framework to guide assessment and planning.

Inclusive Planning

Lessons are designed to ensure that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can access the full range of Curriculum subjects wherever possible. Teachers actively remove barriers to achievement by:

- Adapting teaching methods and materials to meet individual needs.
- Providing tailored support to help pupils develop their English skills and engage in all subjects, particularly for those whose first language is not English.

Further details on our approach to inclusion can be found in the school's **Statement of Equality Information and Objectives** and **SEN Policy**.

6. Monitoring arrangements

The governing body ensures coverage of Curriculum subjects and compliance with statutory requirements through:

- Link governor visits
- Governor meetings
- Website compliance audits
- Annual safeguarding audits

Subject leaders monitor the delivery of their subjects across the school using the following methods:

- Planning scrutiny
- Learning walks
- Lesson observations
- Book scrutiny
- Feedback from critical friends
- Subject audits and action plan reviews

- Discussions with pupils

In addition, subject leaders are responsible for ensuring that resources are effectively stored, maintained, and managed to support high-quality teaching and learning.

This policy is reviewed annually by the headteacher, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and subject leads. At each review, the updated policy is shared with the full governing body for approval.

7. Links with Other Policies

This policy is aligned with and should be read alongside the following policies and procedures:

- Individual Subject Policies
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Examination Policy
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed January 2027.