



The Sunflower Federation

Breakspeare School

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

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(Due to be reviewed 2024)

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Introduction

At Breakspeare School we have a bespoke, personalised curriculum where all students benefit from individualised learning opportunities. A holistic approach to learning means there is equal importance given to both academic and social skills, where the development of the area of 'Myself' is equally as important as the development of 'My Thinking'. The curriculum equips and empowers students with the skills to thrive while at school and after leaving school. We strive to make the students' daily experiences motivating, challenging and enjoyable. We pride ourselves on creating a safe, secure and age appropriate learning environment in which students are able to mature and flourish.

Core Principle; A curriculum that is supportive, enjoyable, provides learning for life with a sole focus on the individual child.

Implementation

Breakspeare School has an extremely complex and diverse student population with a wide range of learning and other complex needs. The depth and breadth of the curriculum seeks to provide the right teaching and learning combination that meets the requirements of our students. Each area of the curriculum is personalised to meet individual need and ability yet with high expectations and targets focussed on extending and developing each student.

Each phase, lower, middle and upper follow a topic based approach to the curriculum which promotes, interest, curiosity and engagement. This termly structure enables all the strands of the different areas of the core curriculum to be covered throughout the year. The foundation subjects can be designed to give students access to a broad and enriching curriculum. Teachers in each phase meet regularly to plan together and develop ideas to complement and extend the learning according to the topic for the term. Our curriculum in all key stages benefits from cross curriculum links through the teaching of topics. Teaching and learning is delivered in whole class groups, small groups and in 1:1 settings. It is taught inside the school building and within the school grounds as well as in the local and wider community.

Intent

The curriculum intent is to prepare all pupils for life ahead and post school.

The students learning centres around the development of;

- functional communication skills to become understood and be able to make decisions and choices in their life
- functional self-help skills: eating/drinking, dressing, hygiene, keeping themselves safe
- leisure skills that bring them joy, engagement and pride in taking part
- functional mobility and independence skills that enable access to the community and facilitate everyday living skills
- skills to regulate their emotions enabling the students to manage their feelings and develop prosocial behaviours
- skills to manage and contribute to social situations in different environments
- skills to feel confident when accessing the community taking care of him/herself for leisure, work and living
- skills to manage unknown and unfamiliar situations being able to keep him/herself safe
- skills to benefit from using technology

- self-advocacy skills; to express 'no' and express a dislike
- positive self-esteem and self-image

As a learner they are able to

- stay engaged
- make positive interactions
- enjoy their learning
- communicate confidently
- develop their physical skills
- access the community
- try new things and maintain curiosity
- have a sense of identity
- become flexible
- be part of a social group
- make relationships
- occupy themselves
- ask for help
- make choices and decisions
- are able to self-regulate behaviour
- practice perseverance
- develop generalised skills
- become self-aware

Teaching Strategies

Personalisation and Differentiation

Every student's learning is personalised according to individual need and ability. Some learners are able to learn successfully in group based teaching contexts and they will have more of their teaching and learning delivered via group lesson plans with individual lesson plans supporting their access to group teaching.

This will not be appropriate for all learners. Some will need individually planned timetables and learning opportunities based on the students learning style in order to grow in skills and knowledge. This may be required for a variety of reasons relating to ASD, behaviour, physical, medical and other impairments that necessitate a tailored approach.

We pride ourselves on differentiating to the level of the students ability (not there disability) and curriculum and lesson plans are modified accordingly so that students can learn at their level.

All students are provided with opportunities to participate alongside peers and in small group settings as their skills develop and the acquisition of group skills forms part of the learners personalised curriculum.

Relationships and Routines

We believe that the relationships between staff and students are vitally important and underpin the quality of the learning that is delivered. We invest time in developing positive interactions, understanding interests and motivations as well as recognising and acknowledging individual moods and behaviours.

Relationships strengthen through routines and a consistency of approach. All students at Breakspeare benefit from a timetable that is structured and reliable so that they can learn the connection between an object of reference and the lesson they are travelling to or that they can prepare for a horse riding lesson by reading a social story with an adult.

Curriculum in Context

Teaching and learning takes place throughout the whole school day in structured lessons, lunch time or in the playground. Staff support students learning in a variety of contexts and 'make the most of every opportunity' to reinforce learning. This for example could be a student introducing his friends to visitors or a student lifting their legs to support their changing routine.

Learning is at its most powerful when practised in context. We want students to develop skills and knowledge in a safe class setting but recognise that learning is made secure or permanent when completed in context e.g. a student learns to exchange a coin with a peer for a snack in class and then completes the same learning to pay the cashier for a food item in the village shop.

Repetition and Response Time

For our complex and diverse student population it is vitally important that students repeat learning. Repetition reinforces the physical movements required by some of our PMLD students to complete a simple task or learn a simple sign. Repetition reinforces the learning of those counting up to five objects or learning to write their name. Repetition develops the learning needed to reproduce those skills in a new context or with a different person.

All our students can learn but we need to be aware that they may need a longer time to respond to our request or to process the learning. Classrooms can be busy environments and it is important that we value and respect students and focus on their responses however small and give them the time they need to be successful.

Optimizing the Learning

Reflective pedagogy and CPD

Sustainable learning can occur only when there is meaningful engagement. The process of engagement is a journey which connects a child and their environment (including people, ideas, materials and concepts) to enable learning and achievement. At Breakspeare School our teaching pedagogy is based on a deep knowledge of an individual child; this approach enables us to reflect on our practice and adapt our teaching and learning approaches to individual needs.

Active learners are engaged, curious, involved, excited and interested. At Breakspeare School we build teaching by providing our students with meaningful and motivating learning experiences. This enables our students to use and apply what they are learning, become deeply involved, and become resilient and enthusiastic about their learning.

Reflective pedagogy means that our teachers need to have a good understanding of how children develop and progress in their learning. It is important that all teaching staff can accurately assess the pupil's achievements and progress. Reflective pedagogy involves the use of assessment information to plan relevant and motivating educational experiences for each pupil. Therefore we invest in continuous professional development for our teaching staff by providing them with high quality CPD in all aspects of SEN pedagogy.

Behaviour

The teaching groups are designed by considering the students' needs in supporting their behaviour and learning. This is comprised of careful planning of the learning environment, classroom, curriculum, number of students and their learning needs and the number of adults. The students individual behaviour support needs are set out in their individual behaviour plans and behaviour risk assessments. Some students benefit from individual sensory diets as clarified in their individual sensory profiles. All staff have received training in the Herts Step behaviour strategy that is strongly based on preventative behaviour practice. This approach is very effective in managing students' complex behaviour. The staff has adapted a low arousal, positive and respectful way of supporting students' behaviour management and this creates the environment that motivates them back into learning.

Environment

We recognise that the creative use of space can optimize the learning for individual students. Both classroom learning alongside their peers and 1:1 work with a student in a small room can produce the best outcomes. Equally a sensory room for intensive interaction is used as well as outdoor mud kitchen in a wildlife area while other students do paired reading around a whiteboard. The classrooms utilize the space they have with screens for focus and concentration and to enable accessibility for students to be hoisted out of their chairs so they are positioned for the best learning outcome.

Extending Students Learning Experiences

Links with other schools

We have links with three mainstream secondary schools which provides joint projects during the school year that extend our students learning experiences. These range from a week long Art and Music based project called 'Create' where students from both schools work together and perform a show to portray their learning – to a Christmas concert where the orchestra and choir from a local school come to perform alongside our Sunflower Federation choir. The school is linked with the other Hertfordshire SLD Schools through the PE Coordinators who organise competitions throughout the year including swimming, football, athletics, primary and secondary panathlon and boccia.

Enrichment

The teaching and learning at Breakspeare is supported by a wide ranging amount of enrichment opportunities for the students. These include literacy and numeracy interventions, horse riding, dog therapy, music therapy, art therapy, and yoga. In addition there are performances by musical artists, theatre productions and bespoke performances by companies such as Bamboozle for ASD and PMLD students.

Clubs

The school has a number of lunchtime clubs that run on a weekly basis. We have an Eco Club that is well established and students spend time in our Eco garden planting, weeding and watering herbs, flowers and vegetables and learning about the natural environment. We also have a school choir and a wheelchair dance club.

Community visits

Learning in the local and wider community is a significant part of the school curriculum. The Geography, History, and RE subjects provide opportunities for students to visit places of interest in the area that are relevant to the topic. Students learn how to access and be part of the wider community by visiting the library, local shops, park and café. In the process of accessing these places students learn about personal safety, social skills, transitions and self-regulation skills. Deep learning occurs in context as students experience the real world. As students move through the school there are more opportunities to develop their functional skills as well as road crossing and travel training. Visits will also take place to leisure and sporting venues to widen students' experiences and give opportunities to develop physical skills and discover new interests.

College / Work Experience

On a weekly basis, some students attend the local college either via public transport or by school minibus. This experience not only enhances their presence in the local community but also provides an opportunity for integration with mainstream peers. It also serves to prepare some students for their final transition from school to college. There are opportunities for work experience both in the school setting by shadowing various jobs such as site manager or PE teacher or going to outside placements such as 'Sunnyside' Horticulture or a local supermarket.

Multi agency approach

The school maintains strong partnerships with different agencies in order to get the best outcomes for students. This involves regular communication with parents both in home school books and at parents evening and EHCP meetings so that consistency and clarity can be established. Links with therapists in school provide the expertise for physiotherapy, speech and language and occupational therapy needs and requirements. We also work with a Family Support Worker who we employ to support families in areas such as behaviour, access to support services, housing and general wellbeing. In addition we work with social workers, family practitioners, Mental Health Support Team, PALMS, CAMHS, transition support workers and educational psychologists where support for the wider family situation is required.

Planning

Planning implementation of curriculum ensures that in all key stages teaching and learning is designed considering:

- Careful assessment of individual student's learning starting points (baseline assessment)
- Information of individual students' progress over a period of time (Key Stage, academic year, term)
- Setting realistic yet challenging individual targets (high expectations)

Planning ensures delivery of our broad, rich, motivating, individualised and balanced curriculum in line with Breakspeare School's programmes of learning at different key stages.

We expect our teachers to be able to present their plans to ensure high quality teaching in their class. The curriculum planning documents outline how our teachers ensure that individual students' teaching and learning needs are covered.

They do this by planning 'a termly coverage' document that summarises the sequence within different programmes of learning and differentiated learning opportunities for the students in their class. The teachers then may use either medium term plan or individual lesson plan documents to describe differentiated learning activities, resources and methodological decisions to summarise their planned actions for consistent and successful teaching for the students' to achieve their targets.

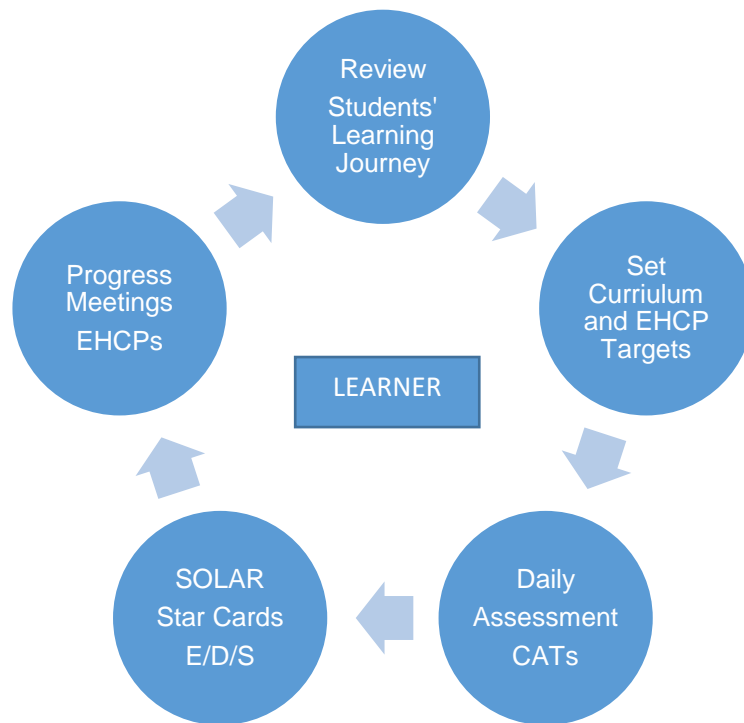
At Breakspeare School we give our teachers freedom to design their own planning documents. It is noted that the outcome of effective planning is not necessary a lengthy planning document. The teachers are able to use their personal style to plan their teaching in the way that is helpful for them.

The planning process incorporates classroom assessment documents for measuring students' progress towards their targets. This information informs necessary adaptations in the planning implementation of curriculum.

Assessment

At Breakspeare School we have developed our own assessment system recognising that if the students need a personalised curriculum it follows that they need a personalised assessment system too. The students we teach, learn in very different ways and at different rates therefore our assessment system recognises that there is not 'a one size fits all' but a 'basketful of tools' approach that is needed to show individual progress. We believe strongly that no students are comparable and that each student has their own learning journey and makes individual progress based on their own abilities. We want to 'measure what matters' for the students and work collaboratively with parents and other professionals to achieve this.

The cycle of assessment looks like this:



The students are assessed within the most appropriate framework for their level of cognition and learning. These are grouped in this way incorporating **Statutory Assessments** alongside our Breakspeare assessments.

STUDENT TYPE	ASSESSMENT
EYFS students (Nursery and Reception Years)	Early Years Profile
PMLD students (Year 1 +)	'Routes for Learning' Framework alongside an Independence framework – Breakspeare Pathway 1, 5 Areas of Engagement Model.
SLD students (Year 1 +)	Breakspeare Pathway 2, (Phases 4 -8) (and Autism Education Trust Progression Framework where appropriate) Pre Key 1 Standards and Pre Key Stage 2 Standards
Students working towards National Curriculum (Year 1 +)	Breakspeare Pathway 3, (Phase 9 – 12) Pre Key 1 Standards and Pre Key Stage 2 Standards

Tracking Progress

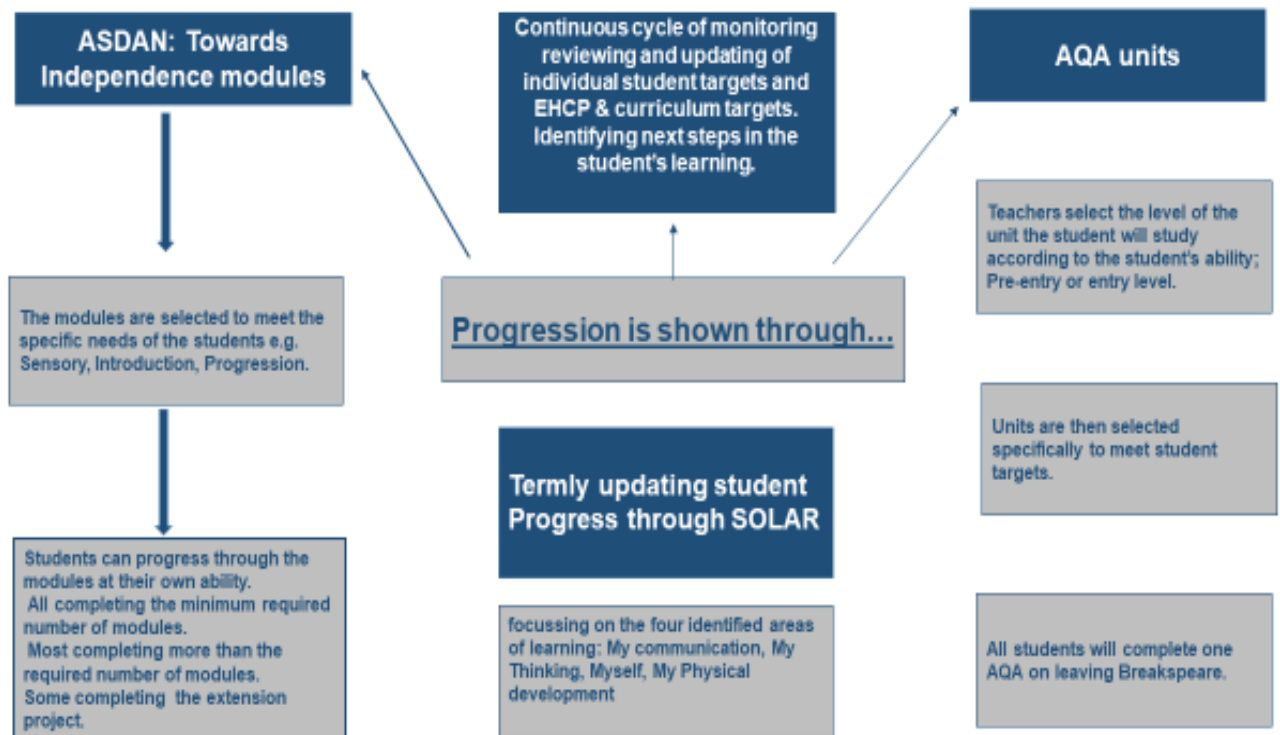
This begins at a target level where our Classroom Assessment Tool (CAT sheet) are completed for each student according to their targets either in a lesson or as part of their daily learning. These sheets are completed throughout the school day to capture the progress in that focussed area of learning as it happens. In addition some classes use rag rated targets and post its so that progress is captured and special moments of progress are not missed. These can be added to learning journals to support EYFS assessment if required.

The CAT sheet information then provides the evidence for our web based assessment system called SOLAR where we record students' progress. All the assessment systems are stored on SOLAR and each students' learning journey is tracked on their individual pathway. This system allows all the targeted statements in all pathways to be broken down into three stages, Emerging, Developing and Secure, meaning that even the small steps of progress can be recorded and celebrated.

Students are baselined on their learning pathway in the first 6 weeks of starting the school. Then begins a learning journey that tracks students from their starting points to progress year on year in different subject areas. SOLAR generates a star card for each target in which context, and evidence both written and photo or video can be added. Class teams add 4 pieces of evidence per term per student. Tracking and assessing students' progress focuses on their individual progress over a period of time from their starting point. The starting point that we measure the progress against can be a key stage, the academic year, a term or a module of learning for a shorter period of time.

Our assessment systems all work most effectively as we work collaboratively with other professionals and agencies as mentioned earlier.

• Progression in the Upper School



In addition to the main assessment systems, our holistic approach to learning includes opportunities for students to learn and progress in swimming and gain swimming badges and certificates, to participate in sports tournaments and creative festivals and receive special achievement certificates for aspects of personal achievement and development. This is facilitated through reflection times in classrooms and celebration assemblies.

Teachers meet with the Deputy Head twice in the year and in June progress is reported on. The process is set so that targets are set for progress in the core areas of the curriculum in September. Progress is reviewed in February and appropriate interventions and support are put in place. Then in June progress can be reported on in line with individual learning journeys. The Deputy Head will produce reports for the Governors according to the progress and learning of the students each year and report to the Department for Education as required with the statutory data requirements.

Monitoring

At Breakspeare, we effectively carry out monitoring through a model of distributed leadership. The Phase leaders are responsible for monitoring timetables, curriculum coverage, medium term plans. The Senior Leadership Team carry out regular lesson observations and learning walks and meet weekly with the phase leaders to monitor ongoing planning and delivery of teaching and learning. There are opportunities for peer observations and curriculum discussions between teachers and learning support staff. The main purpose of the monitoring is to carefully assess what each student needs now, next and in the future in their learning

journey but also recognises what each student might need on that day in terms of accessing the curriculum from their daily starting points.

Reporting to Parents

Teaching, Learning and Assessment is reported to parents in a number of different ways both formally and informally. The teachers prepare a report for the EHCP which details the students' general learning and development, and their progress towards the EHCP targets from the previous year. This is sent in advance to parents in preparation for the yearly EHCP meeting. Teachers produce an end of year report for parents and meet twice a year for parent evenings to show case students learning and progress.

In addition, we utilise a home – school communication book where staff share learning and achievements with parents on a daily basis and regular letters from the Head teacher inform parents of the more general achievements of individuals or groups of students throughout the school year.