

The teaching of English at Birkett House School

Text Coverage						
	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 1
Key Stage 1	Stories with a familiar setting.	Stories from a range of cultures	Stories with predictable and patterned language	Traditional and fairy tales	Stories with predictable and patterned language	Information texts
Key Stage 2 (lower)	Stories about fantasy Worlds	Extended stories	Poetry Pattern and Rhyme	Traditional and fairy Tales	Explanations	Recount Fact and Fiction
Key Stage 2 (higher)	Different Stories by the Same Author	Stories from a range of cultures	Poems on a theme	Traditional Myths and legends	Stories by significant authors	Classic poems
Key Stage 3	Film narrative	Stories with a familiar settings	Bibliography and Autobiography	Journalistic writing	Persuasive writing	Dramatic conversations
Key Stage 4	Fiction genre	Poetry	Short stories with flash backs	Traditional myths and legends	Stories by Significant authors	Film narrative

Cross Curricular Coverage

- Instructions
- Information texts
- Lists

‘English has a pre-eminent place in education and society. A high quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others and through their reading and listening others can communicate with them. ‘

‘The overarching aim is to promote high standard of literacy by equipping pupils with a strong command of the spoken and written word, and develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.’

Spoken Language

The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils development across the curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar and their understanding for reading and writing.

Reading

This consists of two dimensions.

- word reading

- comprehension (both listening and reading)

It is essential that pupils' developing pupils' competence in both dimensions, different kinds of teaching are needed for each.

Writing

Again there are two dimensions

- transcriptions (spelling and handwriting)
- composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech and writing)

At Birkett House we plan a student's learning that ensures they reach their full potential in all area.

For learners working at the earlier stages of development Communication and Language is the focus.

Communication and language

The ability to communicate is central to learning and life. At Birkett House we strive to find ways for every student to be understood. Therefore the development of communication and language is central to the work we do at school. This is reflected in the school's Total Communication Policy. We use a variety of communication methods including Verbal communication, Makaton Signing, Body signing, Objects of reference, photographs, symbols and PECS.

We work closely with speech and language therapists and specialist teachers when planning students' learning programme for developing their communication and language skills. Student's individual therapy targets are integrated in this programme of learning and monitored regularly.

Our students are intentional communicators. This means staff need to be skilled and sensitive when interpreting students' behaviour so that we can respond appropriately. Every opportunity should be taken to develop students' intentional communication. This means that students' vocalisation, eye contact, gestures, shiver, cough, laugh etc, needs to be responded to immediately either by vocalising, commenting on what has happened or copying the sound. This reinforces intentional communication through the learner realising that performing a particular action causes an effect.

'Contingent responding' means that the students hasn't made the one to one association yet but is working towards that. It is important to remember that humans have sympathetic nervous systems and can pick up emotions and feelings around them. Students respond to the emotional atmosphere in the classroom that can positively or adversely impact on their emotional well-being and therefore learning.

At Birkett house our Total Communication Policy means that we take every opportunity to support students' individual communication. Students with complex needs particularly benefit from the use of sensory cues, body signing and objects of reference.

Stages of Communication Development

1. Children at a very early stage of developing communication require people around them to be responsive to any attempts at communication. Interpreting behaviour as potentially meaningful is one important adult response. To be responsive, adults need to attend very carefully to each child and treat all behaviour as potentially communicative.
2. Some children will be more intentional in their communication but not yet able to use conventional language. At this level, children will be developing ways of indicating what they like and dislike. A responsive environment provided by staff should include a widening range of motivating activities upon which children can 'comment'.

3. Some children will be beginning to use conventional communication, understanding or even using a few single words such as 'more', 'finished' and perhaps names of familiar people and objects. Staff should encourage new words and meanings through a range of stimulating activities and providing the example of new words and phrases.
4. Although the basics of communication are established before children reach Step 4, there is still a need for adults to interpret unconventional communication attempts to help shape spoken words and eventually aspects of early literacy.

Key areas that are necessary for the development of communication are; gaze, imitation, turn taking/social interaction, social organisation/social skills, receptive language and expressive language.

Aims

1. Gaze

- Early stage of communication for students that is pre-verbal.
- Skills in this area give students opportunities to make choices and communicate using their eyes.

2. Imitation

- Where communication begins for students,
- They will have opportunities to copy sounds, gestures made by adults
- Use these sounds and gestures in a meaningful way.

3. Turn taking/social interaction

- Early communication skills for students to develop through interactions with adults.
- Students to begin to be proactive in their responses.

4. Social organisation/social skills in relation to language

- Next step on from turn taking.
- To learn more about interactions with others.
- To develop skills in initiating and controlling communication.

5. Receptive language

- Allows students to understand what is happening during their day.
- To understand the words/language/objects that adults use with them.

6. Expressive language

- Allows students to express needs and feelings.
- Allow students to make choices.
- Using objects, signs, symbols/photographs through to verbal language

To enable this curriculum to be an effective document for all students with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities we must extend this programme of learning beyond BH Step 4.