

The **GALLERY TRUST**



A community of special schools



Bloxham Grove
ACADEMY

English Policy

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Introduction

Bloxham Grove Academy is a special academy for children and young people, up to the age of 18, with complex special educational needs and disabilities. All of our students are individuals and we pride ourselves on taking a personalised approach to their provision. Students have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and our area of expertise supports students with Moderate Cognition and Learning Difficulties, Autism and/or Social Emotional and Mental Health needs. All of our students have some form of cognition and learning needs.

Our students also have a wide range of secondary special educational needs including;

- Social Emotional and Mental Health needs
- Communication and Interaction needs
- Sensory and/or Physical needs

We are situated in Bloxham Village, approximately 3 miles outside Banbury and our vision is to support the needs of students who live in North Oxfordshire.

The Academy currently has 77 students on roll and we will gradually increase our student numbers over the coming years. When full, Bloxham Grove Academy will have approximately 120 students on roll between the ages of 7 to 18, with students in Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and 5.

All our students are encouraged to fulfil their academic potential through a creative and engaging curriculum. This ensures that all our students are encouraged, valued and respected.

We are a member of The Gallery Trust, a special multi-academy trust based in Oxfordshire. The Gallery Trust is dedicated to providing outstanding education and support for children and young people with SEND.

This English policy exists to ensure that students, parents and staff have a clear guide as to our aim for Bloxham Grove Academy's whole school approach to the teaching and development of spoken language, reading and writing in our English and broader curriculum.

What is our intention with the English curriculum?

Bloxham Grove Academy delivers high quality teaching that is adapted and personalised for all students. Our English curriculum offer takes into account both our contextual safeguarding needs and the intersectional vulnerabilities of our school community. We reference Bloxham Grove Academy's Risk and Resilience data to help us identify the current key themes for the curriculum.

The intent of our English curriculum is to ensure our students acquire the key skills of reading, writing, and speaking and listening. All students are encouraged to be confident speakers, proficient readers and writers who are able to use their literacy skills to fully access the world around them. Bloxham Grove Academy is committed to encouraging our students to develop their spoken language skills as this underpins the development of reading and writing.

We aim to develop a love of literature and of reading through providing our students with a rigorous programme to develop reading skills from phonics. This is delivered by focusing on the stages of early reading, and accessing books and digital literature so that our students' confidence increases and they identify themselves as readers. The reading curriculum is enhanced through exposure to high quality books which are currently beyond their reading ability although they are accessible through class discussion. This strategy aims to develop students' love of stories and nonfiction texts and expand their knowledge of the wider world whilst at the same time encouraging them to read further and wider.

Writing skills, including handwriting, spelling, composition and vocabulary, grammar and punctuation are developed through discrete teaching as well as through students being provided with opportunities for writing across the curriculum. Written activities are carefully considered, with a clear purpose, to develop the skills needed to develop confidence and the ability to achieve success in real life, functional writing skills.

Careful consideration has been given to each aspect of the English Curriculum in order to ensure success for all students. Bloxham Grove Academy students have experienced varying success when previously learning to read and write and have preconceived ideas about the subject, as well as their ability to succeed with reading and writing. Therefore, the English curriculum designed for Bloxham Grove Academy students focuses on functional skills as well as experiencing fun and accessible learning experiences.

Phonics and Early Reading

At Bloxham Grove Academy, it is recognised that the ability to read independently is one of the most important skills to teach students. Not only does it allow access to all other areas of the curriculum, it is a vital life skill. Therefore, in order for our children to read any kind of text fluently and confidently, and to read for enjoyment, the systematic teaching of reading through phonics is vital.

Bloxham Grove Academy uses an evidence-based synthetic phonics programme to secure the skills students need to be successful readers. The Nessy Learning platform is used to support the delivery of a multi sensory approach to the teaching of phonics, early reading and spelling. The Nessy programme is based on the science of reading. The Science of Reading is everything that is scientifically known about how children learn to read, and the most effective way for reading to be taught. The Science of Reading is not a methodology or system designed to teach reading, it is a process which uses the scientific basis for teaching reading, and helping children become competent readers.

Nessy provides students and teachers with all the information necessary for a reader to learn how to identify sounds, decode, blend and segment successfully. Nessy learning acknowledges that there is a code to the English language, and it supports the teacher and the student to unlock it successfully.

All students complete a baseline assessment on the Nessy platform to ascertain their starting point. The programme analyses their responses and uses algorithms to identify gaps in knowledge and next steps for students. This detailed information supports teachers to meet the individual needs of all students within their class.

During phonics sessions across the week, students receive personalised, discrete phonics teaching and are provided with opportunities to apply and consolidate their phonics learning. The multi sensory approach facilitates learning through traditional phonics teaching methods; using manipulatives including play doh, counters and magnetic letters, the completion of paper based tasks as well as playing games both with peers and on the Nessy platform.

All staff are trained to deliver both discrete phonics teaching and utilise the Nessy platform resources to enhance phonics delivery to students, ensuring success. This knowledge enables staff to provide effective, personalised support for individual students with reading and writing tasks across the curriculum.

Phonics teaching is a key feature for our younger students' daily learning through either targeted 1:1 or small group work. Students will continue to work through the programme as they progress through the academy to ensure they are secure and can apply their knowledge to both reading and written tasks with growing confidence and independence.

Decodable books, tailored to students' ability and interests, also support reading development. Students and books are matched using the targets identified on the Nessy platform. The books focus on the current sound target, this enables students to develop their confidence and apply and consolidate their learning in a whole text. All books also have resources for students to complete, either supported or independently,

in designated reading sessions across the week. This provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate a secure understanding and experience success in reading.

Students also regularly read 1:1 to class adults. Individual reading is one of the most enjoyable and effective ways of teaching reading, and students enjoy the 1:1 approach. Even the most reluctant readers respond positively to the opportunity to have 1:1 reading sessions.

For many students, this may be the only time they have to share a book with an adult. Their choice of book matters; it shows their interests, which can then be followed up in class. Support is given at the level that the student needs. Students are moved on when ready and they are encouraged to read challenging texts that they might not have chosen. Individual reading also highlights gaps in sound knowledge that can be filled during phonics sessions; it allows the modelling of expression and pace; discussion about content, events, characters' choice and behaviour and possibly beautiful illustrations; and opportunities to discuss interesting names and new words which develops vocabulary knowledge. All of which provides the teacher with a better understanding of the student as a reader and as an individual.

Developing a love of reading

At Bloxham Grove Academy we believe that reading for pleasure must be at the heart of the English Curriculum so that our children can talk, think and read for meaning and write for meaning. Bloxham Grove Academy has developed a stimulating reading environment in all class areas; an environment designed to inspire a community of readers.

Therefore, the English curriculum is designed to encourage a love of reading for all students. It is also intrinsically designed to link with the thematic learning topic each term. The cross curriculum texts are well-chosen and appropriate to expand students' horizons and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the termly theme. Care is also taken to ensure Bloxham Grove Academy students are represented in the texts used. All texts are intended to engage, motivate and inspire students.

All English schemes of learning are planned around high quality and engaging books incorporating all genres in fiction, non-fiction and poetry, including novels, wordless picture books and information books. This exposes students to a wide range of texts presented in many different ways. Access to these texts are supported and scaffolded through well considered planning and quality first teaching. The planning and delivery of each unit, within each class, is personalised with each individual student's needs being considered.

Teaching objectives are pre-planned and sessions are characterised by explicit teaching of specific reading strategies. Sessions incorporate opportunities for:

- shared reading with the teacher modelling the reading process to the whole class as an expert reader, providing a high level of support. Where appropriate the students join in with the reading of the text
- the blended approach that covers deepening understanding or vocabulary, and the development of retrieval, inference, prediction and explanation skills
- teachers modelling, oral response and engaging students in a high level of collaboration to explore chosen aspects of the text

These teaching strategies enable students to be exposed to rich, challenging texts beyond the current reading ability of the majority of the class.

Guided reading sessions in small groups are used during designated reading times ERIC (Everyone Reading In Class) to support students who may be more reluctant to engage in reading or who are fearful of reading due to past experiences of unsuccessful engagement. Carefully curated reading books are selected to support the development of the students' reading skills, build confidence and provide students with opportunities to experience success.

Students also have access to a wide range of Barrington Stokes reading books to support the development of their love of reading. These are readily available in classrooms and students are encouraged to use them to develop a love of reading. Barrington Stoke are specialists in dyslexia-friendly books making them suitable for all students due the following:

- having short chapters and shorter stories which are more manageable for those who get distracted or tire easily
- being expertly edited to remove the barriers to reading, to aid comprehension and accessibility
- having a unique, dyslexia-friendly font designed by specialists to encourage a smooth and easier read
- the use of accessible layouts and spacing to stop the page from becoming overcrowded.
- being printed on off-white or tinted, heavier paper to help reduce visual stress
- containing unpatronizing content matched to the age of the reader, not their reading level

As all students have access to a personal chromebook, opportunities are provided for students to complete on screen reading activities.

Students have personalised First News and Ed Shed accounts.

First News

First News is the UK's only children's newspaper. Established in 2006, the paper reaches over 2.6 million young people every week, both at home and in schools. The aim is to inform and educate children about what's happening in the world around them. It also gives them a platform to share their own ideas and opinions.

First News is used for all students, who have their own personal accounts, often as a whole class activity. Students who have completed Nessy can instead work on comprehension activities, puzzles and quizzes based on articles they have read. It boosts reading for pleasure as students select the article that is of interest to them. First News has stories and news articles which help students to understand the world whilst developing their critical literacy. It provides students with fun and different news-based, non-fiction content that is both educational and entertaining.

Ed Shed

Ed Shed offers a suite of technology based interactive activities through their learning platforms. Students can participate in interactive e-lessons, engaging quizzes, enriching eBooks and stimulating educational games. All students have an individual account, to access the adaptive learning environment that engages students and helps to foster enthusiasm for learning.

Love Reading

It is important that we promote that we are a 'Love Reading' school and timetables of reading must be carefully planned and followed. Allocated time for different types of reading has been allocated in all timetables with the new Reading Framework 2021 used as a guidance. Therefore, reading is not restricted to English lessons. Many opportunities are provided for students to practise and extend their reading in other subjects. Reading for pleasure and enjoyment is given a high priority and time is set aside for children to enjoy a range of texts. We encourage paired-reading, where the children in older classes share books with younger children and engage in peer mentoring of reading.

Reading Journals

Across Bloxham Grove Academy, every child has a personal Reading Journal. Reading Journals have the school Reading Pledges, from both staff and students inside as a reminder of our commitment to reading. Reading Journals are a compilation of all the reading that is undertaken at school, and it is in these Reading Journals that students and staff are expected to record all reading, capturing the wide range of reading that takes place across the school day.

Upon completion of a text, students are provided with a linked task to further demonstrate each student's understanding of what they have read. It also allows staff to record positive comments to encourage students to engage in reading. The Reading Journals are marked weekly, allowing teachers to gather a full understanding of every student's reading, comprehension and reading engagement.

Oracy

With employers now rating communication skills as their highest priority, above even qualifications, the ability to express ideas is more important than ever before. Oracy is a vital part of our school curriculum. The benefits of oracy skills go far beyond academic achievement and employability as they boost a whole range of social, emotional and interpersonal skills, including self-confidence, self-awareness, resilience and empathy. Having the skills and confidence to speak up and believe in yourself has also been shown to enhance our sense of happiness and well-being, preventing the isolation that comes from feeling side-lined. All of which are especially important for our students.

Oral language skills, also known as speaking and listening, refer to the importance of spoken language and verbal interaction in the classroom. Oral language interventions are based on the idea that comprehension and reading skills benefit from explicit discussion of either content or processes of learning, or both, oral language interventions aim to support learners' use of vocabulary, articulation of ideas and spoken expression.

Bloxham Grove Academy oral language approaches include:targeted reading aloud and book discussion with students;

- explicitly extending students' spoken vocabulary;
- the use of structured questioning to develop reading comprehension; and
- the use of purposeful, curriculum-focused, dialogue and interaction

Our students have a range of communication needs which teachers are aware of and opportunities are planned to support the development of speaking and listening skills at the appropriate level for each individual student. Teachers adapt teaching strategies to the needs of their students and use the progression of skills document to ensure all students are making progress and developing their skills in a systematic way.

We thrive to ensure that all students leave Bloxham Grove Academy knowing how to contribute appropriately in social situations, with developed receptive or expressive language skills, and active listening skills. This will be achieved through the oracy feature of English lessons and focus on communication in all its iterations.

Writing

Writing features heavily in the English curriculum. The writing curriculum is broad and takes into consideration the needs of all students. Many students at Bloxham Grove Academy have negative feelings towards writing and believe it is beyond their capabilities. Therefore, curriculum design and mapping has been carefully considered.

Some students join Bloxham Grove Academy with no writing knowledge, and are at the mark-making stages of writing. Activities are designed to develop their fine motor skills and confidence in making marks on paper, following patterns and building their confidence.

The writing process begins in phonics sessions. Students are initially writing the corresponding letters to sounds, building on this knowledge to write words in full. This process often takes place on a whiteboard or scaffold sheet to build confidence and embed the correct letter formation. As a student's phonics knowledge grows the writing activities will become more sophisticated. Developing students' speed and accuracy of handwriting is also a focus in early writing.

Opportunities for writing in English are carefully planned through the overarching scheme of learning. Teachers then adapt the planning, personalising the tasks to the students in their class. These adaptations use the knowledge teachers have about their students, their phonics capabilities and confidence when approaching written tasks and their previous achievements in writing. Adaptive teaching strategies are applied for all learners to ensure they can access the tasks and experience success.

Grammar and punctuation teaching is embedded in English schemes of learning, which provide opportunities for discrete teaching of grammar and punctuation skills, alongside revisiting and rehearsing previously taught skills. Teachers adapt teaching strategies to the needs of their students and use the progression of skills document to ensure all students are making progress and developing their skills in a systematic way.

As students grow in confidence and ability and recognise they are in a safe and supportive environment. They are encouraged to take risks with their content choices, such as expanding their vocabulary banks so their writing is fluent and interesting. The focus at Bloxham Grove Academy is the acquisition of clear and functional writing skills such as the use of a range of punctuation methods whilst at the same time incorporating creative writing and exploring students' imaginations within their writing.

Spelling

The program begins with systematic synthetic phonics which has been proven to be the best way to instruct early readers. As a student's literacy skills develop, they advance to

instruction in spelling, morphology, vocabulary and comprehension. Independent research has shown the program to be effective for all students.

As students complete the Nesy programme they will learn about the essential components of reading and spelling:

- phoneme-Grapheme Correspondences
- six syllable types
- suffixes
- rhyming skills
- phoneme identity, blending and segmentation
- phonological awareness
- phonics and word recognition
- vocabulary, fluency and comprehension

English through the Connective Curriculum

English, reading and our connective curriculum are interleaved. Interleaving encourages students to make connections between topics and it can help strengthen their memory associations. As a result, students can consolidate and retain the information for a longer period of time. Therefore ensuring cross-curricular coverage is essential. English schemes of learning link directly with the theme, deepening students' understanding. All schemes of learning detail opportunities for subject specific reading and the learning of key vocabulary. This will include features such as technical language in science, newspaper articles in PSHE and fictional accounts about historical events in TAL. ERIC sessions support this by providing students with comprehension activities linked to the theme.

Writing Across the Curriculum

As with reading, opportunities for writing are interleaved into connective curriculum sessions. Following the same model as English planning, teachers are provided with an overarching connective curriculum scheme of learning. Again, using their knowledge of their students, teachers adapt the planning in order to plan for purposeful opportunities for writing. The same values of ensuring success for all students in English is applied to writing across the curriculum.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment is built explicitly into lesson planning with a strong focus on assessment for learning strategies that involve students in self and peer assessment. Students will be encouraged, with guidance from their teacher, to reflect on their learning during lessons as well as at the end of each session so that they are fully aware of their next steps of learning as well as how to take these steps.

Accreditation

All students leave Bloxham Grove Academy with recognised and valued accreditation in English. In Key Stages 4 and 5 students complete English Functional Skills accreditations.

Monitoring and Evaluation of English

Leaders monitor and evaluate the implementation of the English curriculum and students' knowledge and understanding through:

- student voice, including student interviews, questionnaires, etc.
- evidence from lesson observations, learning walks, deep dives, work
- planning moderation meetings
- teacher evaluation of lessons and the English programme
- scrutiny of student data e.g. Nesy, Assessment data, TOPs, etc.
- Student progress meetings

Policies which support the English policy:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Marking Policy

Our English policy is informed by the following DfE guidance:

- KS2 and KS3 National Curriculum, 2014 (DfE)
- The Reading Framework: Teaching the foundations of literacy, July 2021(DfE)
- SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 (statutory guidance)

We will ensure that the policy is effectively communicated to staff, parents/carers, including through publishing it on our website. The policy will also be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is in line with Government guidance and legislation and to ensure that our English programme continues to meet the needs of our students.