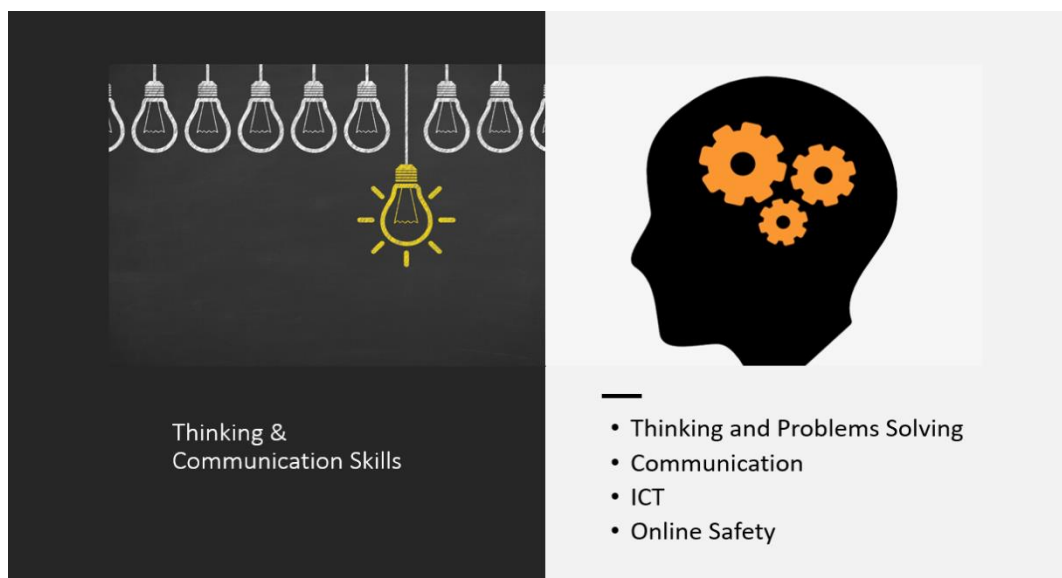# Bleasdale School Thinking and Communication Skills Curriculum Policy

Learning Together/Achieving Together

(8th January 2024)

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Thinking &
Communication Skills

• Thinking and Problems Solving
• Communication
• ICT
• Online Safety

Communication Policy

Communication underpins everything we do and therefore is used within each area of the school curriculum as a means of teaching, reinforcing learning, enhancing and extending learning opportunities for all. At Bleasdale School we aim to:

- To develop pupils' understanding and interpretation of the environment.
- To provide a variety of experiences and opportunities for all pupils to react to and interact with their environment.
- To develop listening skills and attention span.
- To develop pupils' abilities to build relationships.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to make choices.
- To develop pupils' abilities to communicate as effectively as possible.
- To provide a variety **tracking** of opportunities for pupils to develop their tactile, auditory and visual perception skills. Through our pathway model will develop in to **reading.** The love of reading is developed through a range of activities including sensory stories and story massage.
- To develop **gross motor/ fine motor skills** and hand eye co-ordination, which through our pathway model will develop in to **writing**. So as to understand that the written word carries meaning.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to access and develop their understanding of English and Communication through AAC at an appropriate level.
- To give pupils the opportunities to develop awareness of themselves as individuals and members of a community (Citizenship).

At Bleasdale School the intent is to teach English skills to all students although due to the nature of the learners the implementation looks different for each student and the specific pathway they are following alongside a total communication approach: objects or reference, signing, symbols, eye pointing, vocalisations or use of communication aids and spoken word.

Reading Policy

Reading can mean so many different things to learners at Bleasdale school. At Bleasdale all pupil's read every day, enjoying both reading for pleasure and reading for functional use. This can look different to each learner and as such will be recorded differently.

Our intention is:

- A curriculum which provides the children with a broad range of experiences which are describable through rich vocabulary
- To prioritise the essential skills for language and communication across the curriculum
- To teach pupils the skills they need to 'read' and 'communicate' in ways relevant to their individual needs
- To provide a literacy-rich environment with high quality books and resources
- For children to become inquisitive about books and to enjoy reading or being read to
- To deliver an engaging and motivating reading curriculum
- To follow, when appropriate to an individual pupil, a systematic, synthetic approach to phonics which lays the foundations required to become a fluent reader
- To use a range of teaching strategies in response to the unique ways that pupils learn to read
- That pupils will read and/or respond to a wide range of 'texts'.

Reading for pleasure is an activity that has real emotional and social consequences. There is a growing body of evidence which illustrates the importance of reading for pleasure for both educational purposes as well as personal development. (DfE 2012)

A wide range of strategies are used to teach literacy at Bleasdale in order to best meet the needs of its pupils, many of whom have difficulty with auditory or visual processing, long and short-memory or other difficulties which are prerequisites to proficient reading and writing.

Whole Class Story Time	Teachers and support staff tell stories to children regularly. The stories are chosen from a box of agreed, pre-selected books. The planning of books shared during story time ensures that a range of materials are used over the year and key stage, to avoid repetition and ensure that the children experience of wide range of high-quality texts.

Sensory Stories & Bag Books/ Sensory Story Umbrellas	Sensory stories convey simple narratives using a mixture of text and complimentary sensory experiences. Each section of the story is accompanied by a sensory experience to help bring the story to life. When telling sensory stories, it is good to incorporate all the senses where appropriate so touch, smell, sounds, taste and visual stimuli. Sensory stories are appropriate for all children in school and enable them to access stories in many ways rather than just auditory involvement. Story umbrellas are a fun way of immersing a child in a story. Story props and sensory stimuli are displayed on the umbrella. These are props are brought around in to the child's eyeline at the appropriate time in the story. Children are encouraged to reach out and explore the resources.
Total Communication Reading	Functional use Total communication to understand stories or interact with the world is key – including object of reference, symbol use, makton and on body Makaton.
Audio Stories	According to the Audio Publishers Association, audiobooks help "build and enhance vital literacy skills such as fluency, vocabulary, language acquisition, pronunciation, phonemic awareness, and comprehension". Using audio books enables pupils to engage with a story of their choice without relying on an adult to read it to them. It is intended that pupils will be able to access good quality texts outside of school enabling them to make positive use of their leisure time.
Story Massage	The story massage programme offers a fun and fully inclusive way of combining the creativity of story, song and rhyme with the benefits of positive touch. Each line of the story is accompanied by a specific massage move.
Magazines & Comics	The Benefits of Comic Books & Magazines: • Reluctant readers become ravenous readers. • Struggling readers gain confidence. • Readers develop inference skills. • Readers expand their bank of words. • Young children who read about different topics can increase their knowledge of the world around them.
Reading Corner	In some classrooms, teachers have transformed a physical space in the classroom to create a conducive, lively and inviting space for reading. Reading corners contain a range of reading material and formats appropriate to the level of development and interests of the children in the class group.
Phonics	

Phonics is the teaching of letters and sounds so pupils can, say, write and spell different words. Not all students at Bleasdale school will be able to do this but they will experience the different stages and sounds, to broaden their experiences of sounds heard. They will be encouraged to make a range of different vocalisations as they take part in phonic sessions. Pupils up-to the 14- 16 class will have daily 10-minute phonic sessions. This will be a whole class activity that is pitched at the appropriate needs of the class, then differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. Students in post 16 will focus on responding to environmental sounds in their sensory text sessions, as they prepare for transitioning into adult services. For all those students where it is appropriate they will have individual phonic sessions to work through the phases.

Phase 1
Phase 1 lays the foundation for future phonics learning. The primary focus is on developing speaking and listening skills to enable children to become ready for developing oral blending and segmenting skills. Phase 1 is split into 7 aspects, though there is considerable overlap between these aspects. In this programme, aspects are introduced and practised in a carefully planned, non-linear manner so children are continually reintroduced to all the essential skills that make up the foundation of phonics learning.

These are arranged in seven aspects.

1: To discriminate sound – environmental sounds
To develop awareness of sounds and rhythms.
To be aware of sounds all around them.
To distinguish between sounds and to remember patterns of sound.

2: To discriminate sound – instrumental sounds
To experience and develop awareness of sounds made with instruments and noise makers.
To listen to and appreciate the difference between sounds made with instruments.

3. To discriminate sound – body percussion
To develop awareness of sounds and rhythms.
To distinguish between sounds and to remember patterns of sound.
To make and respond to sounds made with different body parts.

4: Rhythm and rhyme
To experience and appreciate rhythm and rhyme and to develop awareness of rhythm and rhyme in speech.

To increase awareness of words that rhyme and to develop knowledge about rhyme.
To be aware of rhyming words.

5. Alliteration
To develop understanding of alliteration.

To explore how different sounds are articulated, and to extend understanding of alliteration.
To listen to sounds at the beginning of words and hear the differences between them.

6. Voice sounds
To distinguish between the differences in vocal sounds, including oral blending and segmenting.
To explore speech sounds.
To listen to different sounds that we can make with our voices.

7: Oral blending and segmenting
To develop oral blending and segmenting of sounds in words.
To listen to phonemes within words and to remember them in the order in which they occur.
To talk about the different phonemes that make up words.
Teachers will plan opportunities to listen carefully and talk extensively about what they hear, see and do. The activities will be appropriate for developing abilities, ages and interests.
Within each aspect above, there is three strands.
■ Auditory discrimination – tuning-in to sounds
■ Auditory memory and sequencing – listening and recalling sounds
■ Developing vocabulary and language comprehension – talking about sounds

For those students who it is appropriate and have some awareness of letter sounds, they will have individual phonic sessions, starting at phase 2.

Phase 2:
Pupils
- Will be able to distinguish between speech sounds.
- Will be able to blend and segment words orally.
- Will also be able to recognise rhyming words.
- Will be taught the graphemes in different sets.
- **Set 1:** s, a, t, p
- **Set 2:** i, n, m, d
- **Set 3:** g, o, c, k
- **Set 4:** ck, e, u, r
- **Set 5:** h, b, f, ff, l, ll, ss

Phase 3
When children start phase 3, they will already know around 19 letters and be able to blend phonemes to read VC words and segment VC words to spell. All should be able to blend and segment CVC words orally and any will be able to read and spell CVC words. They will continue to learn graphemes.
- **Set 6:** j,v,w,x
- **Set 7:** y, z, zz, qu

- **Consonant digraphs:** ch, sh, th, ng
- **Vowel digraphs:** ai, ee, igh, oa, oo, ar, or, ur, ow, oi, ear, air, ure, er

When students can blend and segment words, ie reach phase 3, they will be introduced to reading books.

Thinking and Problem Solving Policy

Thinking and problem-solving experiences help the pupils to explore, investigate and understand the world. At the earliest stages of development, pupils strive to make sense of experiences and sensations that involve changes in pattern, quantity, space and time. Such experiences help them develop fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills, thus moving from random to trial and improvement responses, and on to anticipate and predict.

Thinking and Problem Solving experiences offer Bleasdale pupils opportunities to:
- o Build on their awareness of events and actions to recognise changes in pattern, quantity and space in their immediate environment and in the wider world.
- o Use their developing awareness to anticipate and predict.
- o Use their awareness and developing understanding of pattern, space, shape and number to develop problem solving skills that contribute to making choices, taking decisions and gaining control over their immediate environment.

Bleasdale pupils may not develop the higher levels of skills, essential for some Mathematical understanding. However the range of opportunities offered aim to stimulate the pupils' interest and curiosity about the world in which they live and aid them in trying to make sense of thinking and problem solving information.

- To offer pupils access to a broad and balanced sensory Mathematics curriculum.
- To encourage thinking and problem solving curiosity. Pupils begin to perceive the world around them with more sensitivity and understanding, they may begin to realise that their actions or the actions of others can make things happen. Many of these actions are the beginning of thinking and problem-solving abilities.
- To give pupils access to and develop awareness of a range of specific sensory Problem solving terms at a level appropriate to their needs.
- To provide pupils with a broad and balanced range of sensory problem solving experiences within the curriculum to promote an individual level of curiosity.
- To give pupils the opportunity to work independently or to work with full or limited support in a group/whole class activity.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to generalise their skills.
- To include opportunities that promote and develop choice making skills.

- To provide opportunities to develop fluency, reasoning and problem solving skills.
- All pupils should be given the opportunity to access and develop their understanding of mathematical experiences through computing (Information, Communication Technology ICT) at an appropriate level.
- To give pupils the opportunities to develop awareness of themselves as individuals and members of a community (Citizenship).
- To move through the pathways to engage with mathematical concepts.

ICT & Online Safety

ICT at Bleasdale is:
- Understand digital systems at the most basic level.
- The effective use of tools and information sources to produce, process and present information and to control external events.
- The exploration, selection and use of materials and equipment for a variety of purposes.
- A process that should be used- where appropriate- to support learning in other areas.

Computer technology is used within each area of the school curriculum as a means of teaching, reinforcing learning, enhancing and extending learning opportunities for all. ICT at Bleasdale also allows students to use technology to communicate and access the curriculum and by using ICT day to day, pupils develop skills which are essential for life beyond the school.

At Bleasdale School we aim to:
- Ensure that all students have access to technology at an appropriate level.
- Develop confidence in using appropriate ICT.
- Develop problem solving skills.
- Enrich and extend student's learning throughout the curriculum.
- Experience the social effects and implications of ICTs.
- Help all pupils use ICT with purpose and enjoyment.
- Provide a continuity of experience and progression of skills throughout the school.
- Develop staff skills to enable them to enhance and extend their teaching and students' learning.
- Monitor and evaluate the experiences and progress of our students.
- Ensure that resources are used to their full potential.
- Ensure that resources and equipment are kept up to date.

In relation to the specific ICT and Computing aims, we aim to:
- Increase perseverance and self-esteem.
- Foster curiosity
- Enable greater pupil autonomy.
- Support individualised learning.
- Support collaborative and co-operative learning.

- Encourage staff to have flexibility, openness and awareness of changes and developments in ICT.
- Develop communication skills.
- Develop problem solving skills (where appropriate).
- Develop an understanding of cause and effect.
- Provide ongoing training opportunities and support for all staff.

Implementation of Curriculum Policies

An Equals curriculum underpins our carefully mapped out curricula. Some of this curricula is very cyclic in its nature and requires the use of the progressive nature of the child, while others natural move from one sequence of learning to another. Progression documents are then used alongside each pupil's "Needs" (which include a range of information from SaLT, EHCP, Parents, OT, Physio, professionals, and knowledge of the child. The teaching team opted for a thematic way to organise the curriculum, not as a focus, but as a creative way to lift the carefully mapped and sequenced learning to lift off the page.

Each teacher is responsible for his or her contribution to the Whole School Curriculum. Good communication and language is a key factor in raising standards across all subjects. Skills will be fostered across all curriculum areas and skills transferred from one lesson to another. All teachers will have consistent expectations. The implementation of the curricula area depends on the students pathway and if they are a To Be Learner (Pre-formal), To Do Learner (semi-formal) or To Know Learner (Formal).

The To Be (pre-formal) learners for example experience, sounds, sensory texts, stories with motor skills and communication sessions. The curriculum has been mapped out and Lead Learning Practitioners will monitor the coverage at key points throughout the calendar of work set out in September each year. This is to ensure pupils are experiencing a range of learning through evaluation of medium term planning and classroom observations. Learning is presented in a sensory manner with the use of specialist technology and knowledge (please see our introductory CPD offer and CPDL programme offers). The monitoring and evaluating of curricular strengths and weaknesses takes place to ensure and maintain high standards in the quality of teaching and learning which is a vital part of curriculum development. At Bleasdale we are a team who have worked hard on the "Why?" of the curriculum and It is the responsibility of all staff but should be led in each curricula area by the lead learning practitioners (LLPs).

Subject Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Time Allocation

Each pupil has an I.E.P that has been written by the class teacher. This serves to identify the subject content covered in that particular term with specific learning outcomes identified and a statement related target against which an individual pupil's performance can be related. The targets are agreed in termly multi-disciplinary meetings and can be addressed in class lessons, recorded and reported via the EfL app, and shared with all school staff and parents. Teaching in class sessions is planned so that enough time is

allocated for the delivery of the Scheme of Work recommendations that are appropriate to our pupils. Teachers will select learning outcomes from the Scheme of Work (the carefully sequence set of learning objectives) and support the implementation alongside the progress documents, (e.g. Towards Communication) to reflect what is considered appropriate to a particular pupil group thus acknowledging the developmentally young nature of all pupils at Bleasdale School, the content will be delivered at an age appropriate level. This allows for adaptive learning in subject matter materials chosen and delivery of breath.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment is used to inform future planning and to give information about each pupil during their time at school. Teachers use their professional judgement which is the most appropriate tool taking into account their current pathway. Assessments are recorded within EfL app and presented to all school partners and parents. We make sure this inquiry based system is at the forefront of the record: pupils are marked against their own progress.

All pupils within the EYFS are assessed using the EYFS profile and students in 14 – 19 use a range of externally moderated accreditation to mark some of the many achievements. Assessment techniques ensure that EHCP outcomes and IEP targets are met and individual needs are covered within curricula areas.

These are managed by:
• Evidence for Learning: Photographic / video evidence of pupils participating in appropriate activities.
• Teacher's observation of individual pupils (case studies).

Assessment will fulfil statutory requirements for all pupils. Teacher assessment is the main focus for statutory assessment of the current pupils at our school. Record keeping enables planning of a pupil's future learning as well as offering a full curricular record of activities undertaken by individual pupils. Records of Achievement and a summary of information gained from a pupil's recording schedules inform parents of their child's individual performance. This is reported to parents annually at the pupil's annual review and the annual school report.

Please see the Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy.

Impact of Curriculum.

• **Pupil's learning and progression**
• Preparing, developing and regularly reviewing a subject policy (annually)
• Planning work collaboratively with colleagues.
• Assisting, reviewing and discussing teacher planning.
• Monitoring the subject across the key stages and offering teacher support.
• Attending all relevant in-service training in this subject area and disseminating information to colleagues.

- Ensuring appropriate and versatile resources provided across the school
- Providing annual subject plan (School Development Plan) for budget/resources etc.
- Monitoring and maintaining the availability and condition of equipment and resources.
- The subject leader may manage some staff development and in-service training
- Relevant aspects may be highlighted in the annual School Development Plan.
- Offering further outreach work to other schools.

Equal Opportunities All pupils at Bleasdale School have access to a relevant curriculum designed to meet their individual needs. The curriculum will offer a breadth of experience and balance of subject areas and activities so as to achieve individual statemented targets. Activities and materials used reflect the multi-cultural society in which we live and are not subject to race or gender stereo typed.

The Curriculum policies will be renewed on an annual basis. Members of the Governing Body of the School and Curriculum Committee may also observe sessions and activities in their monitoring role capacity and contribute to further developments in these curricula areas.

Reviewed By R Parker, 8th January 2024