

YSGOL GYFUN BRYNTIRION COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL



Basic Skills Policy



Bryntirion Comprehensive School

Basic Skills Policy

What are basic skills?

“Basic skills are the ability to read, write and speak in English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general”. (Basic Skills Agency, 1998).

The modern world requires all of us to have a higher level of competence in basic skills and a level of skill thought good enough two or three decades ago is far from adequate now. Over recent years, and latterly ever more rapidly, the level of competence in basic skills we need has increased. We're now surrounded by print – print we have to be able to read, understand and digest. Much of it demands a high level of comprehension and the application of knowledge, rather than a simple ability to decode.

Being numerate means more than just being able to use the four rules. Increasingly we have to understand complex information presented in charts and graphs, deal with percentages and problem solve. So while few people are actually 'illiterate' or 'innumerate', far too many have very real difficulty dealing with words and number at the level almost everyone needs now. All the evidence suggests that this changing level of demand is going to continue well into the next century.

Basic Skills target pupils are defined as:

Pupils who perform in literacy and/or mathematics at a lower level than the attainment expected a pupil of their age. (Basic Skills Agency, 2009)

Aims

- To promote the importance of basic skills;
- To improve the basic skills levels of targeted pupils;
- To enable pupils to achieve to the best of their ability across the curriculum.

Rationale

The school has a strategic approach to raising standards in attainment. The strands of this approach in terms of Basic Skills provision are:

- The identification of pupils who are underattaining in literacy and/or mathematics in comparison to the level expected of them at that age;
- Use of intervention programmes to enable pupils to 'catch up' with expected literacy and numeracy levels, using support staff, volunteers and directed time of teachers;
- Skills lessons within the year 7 curriculum that support the development of literacy and numeracy;
- Banding of pupils in years 8 and 9 to enable skills to be developed at appropriate levels;

- Modified curriculum for KS4 pupils;
- Support for KS5 pupils through their learning coach;
- Cross curricular and key stages approaches to the development of literacy and numeracy;
- Communication with all stakeholders;
- Tracking and monitoring progress of targeted pupils;
- Evaluation of support strategies and cross curricular and key stage approaches.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All teachers have a responsibility to develop the basic skills of all pupils. A school policy in itself provides only a basis for action and the means to ensure their consistent and effective implementation need to be found - the roles of Senior Staff and Subject Leaders are central to this process.

Members of the SLT should:

- Aid the development and implementation of policies that outline the principles and procedures that support a whole-school approach to developing basic skills;
- Create organisational structures to ensure coherent management of basic skills provision;
- Plan an effective basic skills CPD programme to help staff meet the learning needs of underattaining pupils;
- Establish systems of communication and planning to support the effective embedding of basic skills teaching across the curriculum and the most effective deployment of support staff;
- Introduce mechanisms for identifying underattaining pupils and for tracking their progress in literacy and numeracy;
- Establish and monitor the effectiveness of links with partner schools designed to ensure continuity and progression in basic skills support across phases;
- Create opportunities for engaging the parents/guardians of underattaining pupils and providing them with the information and skills to support their children's basic skills development;
- Employ school self-review procedures that monitor all aspects of basic skills provision and which include well informed learning and teaching observations of both classroom practice and additional support;
- Produce self-assessment reports and action plans that accurately assess the quality of basic skills provision in order to drive continuous improvement.

Basic Skills co-ordinator should:

- Liaise with members of the SLT to ensure that policies that outline the principles and procedures that support a whole-school approach to developing basic skills are implemented;

- Liaise with members of SLT to establish systems of communication and planning to support the effective embedding of basic skills teaching across the curriculum and the most effective deployment of support staff;
- Implement mechanisms for identifying underattaining pupils and for tracking their progress in literacy and numeracy;
- Ensure that communication with regards to the progress of targeted pupils is given to all relevant stake holders;
- Create opportunities with SLT for engaging the parents/guardians of underattaining pupils and providing them with the information and skills to support their children's basic skills development;
- Employ school self-review procedures with SLT that monitor all aspects of basic skills provision and which include well informed learning and teaching observations of both classroom practice and additional support;
- Produce, with SLT, self-assessment reports and action plans that accurately assess the quality of basic skills provision in order to drive continuous improvement.

Subject Leaders should:

- Nominate one member of their department to act as a basic skills subject co-ordinator;
- Monitor the provision of support for basic skills pupils within their subjects;
- Undertake lesson observations within the performance management cycle;
- Liaise with basic skills co-ordinator or SMT CPD co-ordinator to identify training needs in relation to basic skills;
- Set high expectations within the department for pupils with basic skills needs;
- Ensure that departmental meetings allow for the dissemination of good practice in relation to basic skill support and provision;
- Ensure that departmental handbooks and SOW identify opportunities and resources to develop basic skills of targeted pupils.

Subject basic skills co-ordinators

- Act as a link between basic skills co-ordinator and department to ensure that information in relation to the provision of basic skills is disseminated;
- Work in the department to embed good practice in relation to support across the curriculum for basic skills pupils;
- Ensure that staff within the department have up to date information in relation to the needs of basic skills target pupils;
- Attend whole school basic skills meetings.

Form Tutors should:

- Be aware of pupils within their tutor group who require support for basic skills;
- regularly check homework diaries and monitor pupils progress;
- deliver those aspects of the pastoral programme related to improving the basic skills of pupils;
- Implement the whole school programme.

Heads of Year should:

- Be aware of pupils within their year group who require support for basic skills;
- Support form tutors in the implementation of the whole school spelling programme;
- Liaise with basic skills co-ordinator if pupils are a cause for concern;
- Liaise with schools during transition to ensure that information regarding basic skills provision is transferred.

Subject teachers should:

- Be aware of pupils who they teach are on the basic skills register;
- Plan lessons that incorporate strategies to develop the basic skills of pupils;
- Be aware of pupils needs/group action plans;
- Liaise with basic skills subject co-ordinators in relation to progress of pupils on basic skills register using group action plans as a vehicle;
- Set high expectations of pupils with basic skills needs, setting achievable targets with pupils.

Intervention support teachers should:

- Be aware of the basic skills needs of the pupils they are providing support for;
- Plan intervention sessions according to pupils needs;
- Keep up to date register of attendance to intervention sessions;
- Keep up to date records of pupil progress;
- Liaise with basic skills co-ordinator progress of pupils and attend Maths/English meetings to disseminate information with regards to progress;
- Set high expectations of pupils with basic skills needs, setting achievable targets with pupils.

Whole School Targets

Improvement of every individual's basic skills is the target of the school. Each pupil is different and as such so is each cohort we receive. The school sets targets for particular cohorts in terms of end of key stage levels and performance in external qualifications.

In terms basic skills pupils, the school sets targets for each individual pupil, with the aim of each pupil catching up to the level expected of their age. The timeframe for this is individual and dependent on the needs of the pupil.

Targets are found in the school and basic skills development plans.

Exemplification of strands

1. The identification of pupils who are underattaining in literacy and/or mathematics in comparison to the level expected of them at that age.

1.1. Transition from cluster schools;

- Literacy

1. Reading (ACCESS reading test) and spelling (VERNON) ages obtained from testing in cluster schools. Pupils who have a reading age result below 10 are highlighted. Any pupils on the SEN/SPLD register are removed from the list. The school then uses a graded system in order to provide support to the identified pupils.
2. NFER/MIDYIS data, when available, are used to ensure that no pupils have been missed from the target groups.

- Numeracy

1. New intake data on pupils joining the school is used to identify a target group of pupils. Those pupils, not on the SEN register, who have attained level 3 or below at the end of KS2 are identified. The school uses a graded system to provide support to the identified pupils.
2. NFER/MIDYIS data, when available, are used to ensure that no pupils have been missed from the target groups.

1.2. Transition from other schools;

Transition information from schools is used by Heads of Year to identify whether any pupils require testing for basic skills support. These pupils are then referred to the Basic Skills Co-ordinator who arranges for tests.

1.3. Entry into Key Stage 5

All pupils are initially tested using the Basic Skills Agency Cymru resources as per PLASC requirements. Any pupils who fall below level 1 in either literacy or numeracy are targeted.

2. Intervention programmes are used to enable pupils to 'catch up' to expected literacy and numeracy level, using support staff, volunteers and directed time of teachers. The school places the majority of its support into Year 7, as recent self evaluation as indicated that as pupils' progress through KS3 they become more reluctant to miss lessons for support and also subjects are less willing for pupils to miss lessons as they progress through the key stage. If a pupil requires support for literacy and numeracy then the literacy intervention programmes are carried out first.

All pupils who are identified as requiring support are diagnostically tested, depending on the support they are receiving. As a minimum all identified pupils will carry out a relevant BKSB diagnostic test.

2.1. Year 7 literacy

2.1.1. Catch up from Pre-Vent (LT)

The 20 pupils with the lowest reading ages are targeted. These then follow the Catch Up literacy programme. The pupils are removed from lessons for 4 30 minute sessions per fortnight for individual support.

2.1.2. Learning Support (FT)

The 10 pupils with the lowest reading ages are targeted. These then follow a programme that develops their spelling and reading skills using a variety of strategies including success maker, speaking star spell, word shark 3 and style literacy programme. The pupils are removed from lessons for 1 hour per fortnight.

Where time is available in registration/assembly periods some pupils who have weak spelling ages are targeted using the above strategies.

2.1.3. Use of directed time (CE/LA)

All identified pupils are supported in small groups by members of the English department in their Head teacher directed time for 1 hour per fortnight. BKSB diagnostic testing is used to identify pupil weaknesses and worksheets are available to support these weaknesses.

2.1.4. Year 12 volunteer programme (RM)

Pupils who require additional help with fluency and expression will spend 15 minutes during 1 English lesson per fortnight taking part in paired/group reading with year 12 students.

2.1.5. Group reading (LT)

Pupils on the basic skills register may receive paired or group reading support if time is available. This will involve removal from lessons of ½ hour per fortnight

2.2. Year 7 numeracy

2.2.1. Support for numeracy (JW)

Initially identified pupils receive support on basic number work using a variety of resources including number workout, success maker and my maths level 3. As the year progresses consultation takes place between the intervention tutor and the class teacher to identify areas of weakness for individual pupils and these are supported. The pupils are removed for 1 hour per fortnight for this support.

2.2.2. Use of directed time (TW/LA)

All identified pupils are supported in small groups by members of the Mathematics department in their Head teacher directed time for 1 hour per fortnight. BKS diagnostic testing is used to identify pupil weaknesses and worksheets are available to support these weaknesses.

2.3. Year 8 literacy

2.3.1. Catch up from Prevent (SE)

Pupils who did not 'catch up' to their expected levels in the year 7 programme continue with 'catch up' literacy. The scheme is modified to >>>>

2.3.2. Learning support (FT)

The pupils who have not met their targets in year 7 continue with support. These then follow a programme that develops their spelling and reading skills using a variety of strategies including success maker, speaking star spell, word shark 3 and style literacy programme. The pupils are removed from lessons for 1 hour per fortnight.

2.4. Year 8 numeracy

2.4.1. Spotlight from prevent (SE)

Pupils who are below their expected level are supported using the 'spotlight' programme funded through the prevent project. This involves removal from lessons for x hours per fortnight.

2.4.2. Support for numeracy (JW)

Pupils who score below a raw mark of 20 on the end of year 7 examination are targeted. Consultation takes place between the intervention tutor and the class teacher to identify areas of weakness for individual pupils and these are supported. The pupils are removed for 1 hour per fortnight for this support.

2.5. Year 9 literacy and numeracy (FT/JW/SE)

The pupils who have not met their targets in year 8 continue with support. These then follow a programme that develops their spelling and reading skills using a variety of strategies including success maker, speaking star spell, word shark 3 and style literacy programme. The pupils are removed from lessons for 1 hour

per fortnight. Some pupils may also still receive spotlight and catch up support if required.

3. Skills lessons within the year 7 curriculum are used to support the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. The lessons develop generic skills that can be applied across the curriculum and the scheme of work is developed to follow the school literacy and numeracy focus for particular terms.

4. Banding of pupils in years 8 and 9 to enable skills to be developed at appropriate levels;

At the end of year 7 summative data is used to band pupils. Examination performance, levels, MIDYIS results and professional judgement are interrogated and pupils placed into one of three bands. This allows pupils' skills to be developed at the appropriate pace, using appropriate teaching support strategies.

5. Modified curriculum for KS4 pupils.

- 5.1. Pupils are identified who may require a modified curriculum through analysis of data and through discussion with Heads of Year.

- 5.2. Pupils identified undertake ASDAN qualification in which literacy and numeracy will be developed.

6. Support for KS5 pupils through their learning coach.

- 6.1. Students are tested on entry to KS5 using Basic Skills Cymru test. Any students who fall below level 1 for literacy and /or numeracy are then diagnostically tested using BKBS.

- 6.2. The results from diagnostic testing are then used by the learning coach to identify support exercises to improve on areas of weakness.

- 6.3. Students also work towards Essential Skills qualifications at the appropriate level for them.

7. Cross curricular and key stages approaches to the development of literacy and numeracy;

- 7.1. All staff are made aware of pupils/students who are on the Basic Skills register, key data and intervention programmes.

- 7.2. Group action plans for pupils are provided to staff termly and indicate current levels in English and Mathematics. These can be used along with the guidance in the literacy and numeracy toolkits as to the literacy and numeracy skills the pupils are currently working at thus ensuring pupils are set realistic and challenging work;

- 7.3. Traffic light system used to allow staff to clearly identify pupils who require most support;

- 7.4. Literacy and Numeracy across the curriculum policies provide a consistent approach to the development of literacy and numeracy, with support strategies for basic skills target pupils available to staff.

8. Communication with all stakeholders;
 - 8.1. Parents/Carers – Parents/carers are informed at least three times per year on the progress of their child in relation to their basic skills development. This will include an initial letter informing them of the support that is to be offered, oral feedback in parents’ evenings and a written report at the end of the year. Support will also be offered to parents in relation to strategies that could be used to help the basic skills of their child.
 - 8.2. Teaching staff – Each department will have a basic skills subject co-ordinator who will be responsible for attending Basic Skills meetings and disseminating information within their department. These meetings will also be used to discuss progress of individuals and support materials/strategies that could be used. Each member of teaching staff will receive information regarding
 - 8.3. Governors – the link governor will receive information in relation to the progress of pupils on the basic skill register throughout the year in reports sent to governor meetings.
 - 8.4. Other institutions – every pupil who has been placed on the basic skills register will take with them a basic skills data transfer sheet when they leave our school. This will include information regarding key stage levels, reading/spelling ages, NFER/MIDYIS scores, along with areas of weakness, strengths and support strategies used.
9. Tracking and monitoring progress of targeted pupils;
 - 9.1. Initial assessment – initial testing using BKSB will take place for all pupils on the basic skills register. This will inform us of their level. This will be followed up diagnostic testing and information shared with relevant staff.
 - 9.2. Progress on intervention programmes – throughout the year pupil progress will be assessed on their intervention programmes using a variety of testing methods. At each reporting period a feedback report will highlight the objectives for the term, knowledge and skills covered, progress made and next steps. Staff will be kept up to date of progress via group action plans that will renewed each term and through Basic Skills meetings. Pupils who complete their targets will be removed from intervention programmes.
 - 9.3. ARR – levels achieved by pupils on the basic skills register will be monitored at each reporting period.
 - 9.4. Traffic light system – pupils progress will be highlighted using a traffic light system. Those pupils still on extensive intervention and require most support will be highlighted red. Pupils who have made progress but still require some intervention will be highlighted yellow. Those pupils who have ‘caught up’ to their expected age level will be highlighted green. These pupils will no longer receive support but will be monitored throughout their time at Bryntirion.

10. Evaluation of support strategies and cross curricular and key stage approaches

Monitoring is defined as checking that practices that are supposed to take place actually do take place. Evaluation involves making qualitative judgements about what is taking place. The main purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning within the department. If robust monitoring and evaluation takes place it will inform future planning and delivery. The following may be used in order to evaluate the basic skills provision within the school:

- Subject leader reviews;
- Observations of intervention programmes;
- SLT lesson observations;
- Pupil trials;
- Pupil work (books/coursework);
- Performance management observations;
- Departmental handbooks, including schemes of work;
- Questionnaires for staff, parents or pupils;
- Pupil voice;
- Examination of pupil data;
- Review of school/basic skills action plans;

The information gathered will be used each year to update the Quality Standards Checklist and set targets and action points for improvement for the next year.