

Language, Communication and Culture Policy

“Communication is Key”

This policy reflects the values and ethos in relation to the teaching and learning of Communication, Language and Cultural awareness within Royal Cross School as a specialist school for deaf/HI pupils. It sets out a framework within which teaching, and support staff can operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment.

Realising pupils’ potential in all areas of the curriculum is dependent on their ability to use language (BSL or English) to access new concepts and develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in the full range of subjects.

Access to written information requires the acquisition of literacy skills and these are promoted through specific resources including visual phonics and sign graphics.

We Believe:

- Communication is the key to good mental health, wellbeing and academic success.
- In an inclusive communication environment and personalised learning approaches.
- In the importance of a deaf/HI peer group and Deaf/HI role models in developing a positive self- identity for our pupils.
- The ability to communicate effectively supports safeguarding and protects our school community

Aims:

- To support and develop the communication, language and cultural development of all pupils as appropriate to the individual child.
- To ensure that teaching and learning in Communication, Language and Deaf Studies is interesting and motivating for all pupils to ensure optimum progress and understanding.
- To ensure that all children have or are developing the ability to communicate meaningfully with those around them in whatever mode they choose or prefer.

Objectives:

- To develop pupil’s key skills in all areas of communication including body movement, facial expression, signing, verbal communication, reading and writing.
- To develop communication through meaningful, multi-sensory experiences for those pupils working within a sensory curriculum.
- To develop and extend opportunities arising from pupils' first-hand experiences and interests to make learning purposeful and enjoyable.
- To consolidate language and communication skills through play and everyday routines.
- To link language with thinking processes in a range of curricular contexts in order to apply and develop their language and cognitive skills.
- To enable all pupils to access learning and communicate effectively using a range of Communications including BSL, symbols and communication devices.

- To enable pupils to feel confident to communicate their thoughts and feelings with adults and peers in a range of social situations and through a variety of expressive means, including Drama.
- To create an inclusive environment that reflects the rich variety of languages represented within our school, including BSL.
- To promote a wide use of ICT and media texts as a medium for the further development of language and communication across the curriculum.

Inclusive Environment:

- It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity or social circumstance, have the equal opportunity to access to the curriculum and make the greatest progress possible.
- We value the role and contribution of BSL and Deaf adults in the education of Deaf children and acknowledge the importance of community languages and religious beliefs in order to facilitate the learning of all pupils regardless of their background. Differences and similarities between children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds are both recognised and valued.
- Maintaining an inclusive communication environment ensures everyone feels included in all aspects of school life and doesn't miss out on any part of the day.
- All staff must ensure that communication is accessible to everyone and consider the most appropriate use of BSL / SSE / speech and amplification equipment at all times. This ensures full access to all aspects of school life so that pupils can benefit from opportunities for incidental learning in addition to an appropriate style of curriculum delivery.
- Care must be taken at break times, in the hall at lunchtime, around the corridors and in any situations where deaf staff / children are in the vicinity and could 'over see' communication taking place.
- Pupils benefit from opportunities to interact with all members of the school community because staff are expected to practice deaf awareness and flexibility with regard to communication modes to ensure there is access for all.

Speaking/Signing & Listening/Attending:

Communication is at the heart of all teaching at Royal Cross School. The school has a totally inclusive environment with communication options suited to individual needs i.e. BSL/Sign Supported English and speech are used in whatever combination works best for each child.

We have a personalised approach to developing pupil's communication skills for pupils in their preferred mode of communication.

This approach includes: -

- Communication targets
- Speech and language therapy programmes
- BSL language programmes
- ELKLAN trained staff - interventions
- Communication & Language assessment week
- Developing sign/vocabulary across the curriculum

- Specialist audiological resources and equipment
- Drama activities to develop expressive communication, self-esteem & self-confidence

Communication:

Royal Cross School aims to develop a clearly understood approach which does not leave language and communication development to chance but instead provides consistency, clarity and the opportunity to measure individual progress.

Language at Royal Cross incorporates a range of modes, including verbal expression and comprehension and other forms of communication such as British Sign Language, Sign Supported English and symbols.

Language and communication development is a continual and cross – curricular activity and happens throughout the whole school day.

There are opportunities during: -

- teaching sessions, formal, informal, and general activities
- social times - playground, snacks and lunch times and educational and community visits
- times of transition, arriving at school and going home
- movement around the school, in the corridors.

Sign Graphics:

- Sign graphics/print ('Communicate in Print') are displayed around school & classrooms and shared with families.
- Display work in the corridors and classrooms should, wherever possible and appropriate, have sign graphics/print and written descriptions and placed at children's eye level.
- Similar to signing, sign graphics/print should be in evidence in every class in the school to ensure consistency and continuity.
- The extent of the use of sign graphics has to be a decision for the individual style of the class team and the nature and ability of the children in the class.

Photographs:

The use of photographs is also an important part of the Augmentative and Alternative Communications used within school. Photographs can be used alongside sign graphics/print to help children understand the link.

Objects of Reference:

The use of objects is a means by which some pupils can be helped to make sense of their world and develop understanding of events. An object is presented to the child with accompanying language/sign to prepare the child for the event that is to follow e.g. pull ups to signal changing time. Over time, with practice, the object should cue the pupil to anticipate activities.

Differentiation:

The development of children's language and communication necessitates a variety of differentiated texts and approaches across the four language modes (speaking, listening, reading and writing).

Meticulous planning, accurate assessment and a thorough understanding of each child's communication needs will ensure that teaching approaches and resources are appropriately matched to individual pupils, including the more able and those children with specific learning needs, across year all groups.

The Role of Computing in Supporting and Developing Literacy and Language:

Deaf children can be particularly vulnerable due to their language and communication difficulties and need to learn protective behaviours for personal safety both online and 'out and about'. Online Safety support is a high priority for both pupils and their families.

We aim to make maximum use of ICT across the curriculum to promote pupils' language and communication skills, as well as developing competence in IT skills and an understanding of how to stay safe online.

All pupils will have the opportunity to access computers and other appropriate technology using assistive devices that meet their individual needs. For instance, using a loop system in the hall and radio aids in classrooms.

The Range of ICT Resources available include:

- Word processors
- Communicate in Print
- iPad - communication apps, email and Skype
- Interactive Whiteboards / interactive TV's (Clever Touch)
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices with Internet access, and SEN programs

**For further details see the Computing Policy*

Assessment:

Assessment is used to inform planning and subsequently future teaching and learning and to contribute to the pupil's record.

Both Speech Therapy and BSL assessment/tuition are provided as appropriate and all pupils have individual communication targets as part of their Personal Learning Plans.

Continuous assessment and teacher observations are carried out and recorded on B Squared at 3 key points a year.

**See Assessment Policy*

Cross-Curricular Links:

The central concern of all our teaching is to develop pupils' abilities to think, explore and communicate (speech, sign, using communication devices). Many language and communication skills can be promoted and delivered through other areas of learning and cross-curricular themes.

High priority is given to supporting the development of the appropriate vocabulary linked to the creative curriculum topics and day to day routines. This vocabulary is shared with families through school workshops, Class Dojo, school web site and home visits.

Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural Development:

We are committed to promoting community cohesion through respecting and valuing all cultural diversity within our school. Our curriculum promotes fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs, including minority groups. At a suitable level this helps children to understand the importance of respect and develop the skills and attitudes needed to be responsible citizens in modern Britain.

Language and communication at Royal Cross promotes the following:

Spiritual development – helps pupils to understand their own place in the world through communication and interaction with others; allows pupils to express their own views and helps to develop the ability to express and discuss their beliefs.

Moral Development – Through helping the pupils to develop independent thinking skills in order to take initiative in difficult situations; developing pupil's ability to attend to others and respond accordingly.

Social development – Through helping pupils to understand different social situations and to communicate effectively in a range of social contexts. Emotional well-being and self-esteem are an important priority. At Royal Cross all deaf children have a peer group and role models to strengthen their personal and social confidence.

Cultural development – Through helping pupils to develop a positive self-identity and an understanding of their place in the world as a deaf/Hi individual. Teaching across the curriculum incorporates cultural aspects of the Deaf Community and the ethnic and religious groups represented within the school. The curriculum includes Deaf Studies as part of PSHE.

Organisation:

English Subject Leader

All teachers at Royal Cross School accept shared responsibility for promoting inclusive Communication, Language and Culture throughout the school.

The English Subject Leader along with SLT will have responsibility for:

- The provision of leadership and direction in promoting Literacy.
- The support and motivation for colleagues in ensuring the needs and aspirations of pupils are met.
- The setting of priorities in liaison with staff, to improve provision.
- The identification of needs in the area of language in relation to the needs of the school.
- Contribution to monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Commitment to her own on-going professional development, and subsequent informing of the rest of the staff of recent curriculum innovations and research in the area of Language and Communication.

Class teachers

All teachers at Royal Cross School accept shared responsibility for promoting inclusive Communication, Language and Culture throughout the school.

The teacher's role is:

- to build up a caring, trusting and supportive inclusive communicative environment where all are valued, and self-esteem is developed
- to be flexible in communication approaches; and sensitive to differences in communication/learning styles and rates of learning;
- to be aware of own inclusive communication and position as a role model;
- to avoid negative responses to pupil's contributions;
- to use effective questioning to promote all aspects of learning and communication
- to be aware of the need for careful planning progressively, differentiating where appropriate;
- to keep records and monitor progress;
- to direct support staff to work with individuals or small groups as needed.

BSL Instructor

All teachers at Royal Cross School accept shared responsibility for using and promoting an inclusive communication environment within school.

The BSL instructor will have responsibility for:

- The provision of leadership and direction in promoting BSL
- The support and motivation for colleagues in ensuring the communication needs of all pupils are met.
- The setting of priorities in liaison with staff to improve provision.
- The identification of needs in the area of BSL in relation to the needs of the school.
- Contribution to monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Commitment to own on-going professional development, and subsequent informing of the rest of the staff of recent curriculum innovations and research in the area of communication and BSL.

Speech and Language Therapists

All teachers at Royal Cross School accept shared responsibility for supporting inclusive communication environment within school which includes access to Sign Supported English and the best possible use of all hearing technologies to ensure optimum access to sound/speech for all our pupils. Royal Cross also has access to 2 x SALT who work within school 2 x mornings a week to support pupils and staff in the speech and Language communication.

The SALT will have responsibility for:

- Producing individual Episode of Care Plans for appropriate pupils.
- Work with teachers and ELKLAN trained support staff to support individual SALT interventions.

- Support all staff in specialist interventions and strategies for development of speech and language.
- Support families as needed to work on specialist interventions and strategies at home.

Resources:

- BSL resources are kept in the Sunshine room and should be used and returned accordingly. The BSL instructor will support colleagues to access & use resources.
- BSL Sign Graphics (Communicate in print) – available on all class laptops.
- SALT / language assessment resources are kept in the Speech room. English subject leader; Speech and Language therapists and ELKLAN staff will support colleagues to access & use resources.

Conclusion:

This policy summarises our whole school approach to Language, Communication and Culture teaching and learning. It should be read in conjunction with whole school policies including:

- Online Safety
- Single Equalities Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy