



**Ark Burlington Danes
Academy**

Ark Burlington Danes Curriculum Intent for Students with SEND

At Ark Burlington Danes Academy, we believe that everyone deserves to be accepted, included and empowered to live a life that is purposeful and fulfilling.

Our universal curriculum offer supports this vision and our Christian ethos: it is a broad, balanced and equitable offer, built around the core disciplines of English, mathematics, science, humanities, languages and religious education, alongside creative and active subjects including art, music, performing arts, food technology, computing and physical education.

This is complemented by our non-examined curriculum, which provides our students with rigorous and ambitious understanding of PSHE, careers, RSE, citizenship, knowledge of the world and current events, habits of study, and reading for pleasure.

Our curriculum offer for students with Special Educational Needs

At BDA, we are as ambitious for the knowledge and outcomes of students with SEND as we are for all students in the academy. For this reason, we ensure that students with SEND have access to the full breadth of the curriculum and that this gives them the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

Approximately 50% of our students with SEND are taught with non-SEND peers in groups set by prior attainment, and their needs are met primarily through quality-first teaching, with teachers using the BDA Signature Strategies of Instruction to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of these students in their classes.

For students with SEND who have more complex needs, particularly in the areas of Cognition and Learning or Communication and Interaction, more scaffolding and support may be required that can be easily provided within these groups. For this reason, we have a nurture group in each year group to meet these students' more complex needs.

Why do we have Nurture Groups?

At BDA we recognise that not all students arrive at school with equitable starting points. It is our intent to ensure that our curriculum addresses social disadvantage by addressing gaps in students' knowledge and skills. For this reason, we adapt our broad and rich curriculum through the teaching of nurture groups to meet the needs of our most disadvantaged and SEND learners. This ensures they can meet ambitious outcomes across the full curriculum and at an age-appropriate level and provides them with the 'knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life'.

We do not, however, offer a reduced curriculum for those students in nurture groups. We feel it is important to include students of nurture groups in all aspects of school life in order for them to develop the 'knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence.

As it is recognised in the new Ofsted framework, 'if pupils are not able to read to an age-appropriate level and fluency, they will be incapable of accessing the rest of the curriculum, and they will rapidly fall behind their peers.' There is a focus on reading in both the universal BDA curriculum and in our nurture groups in order to address this gap.



Identification and Assessment of Students for Nurture Groups

At BDA, we have a rigorous process of transition that allows us to gather the information we need on every child so that we can begin the process of SEND identification early.

This includes:

- Gathering in-year prior attainment data from primary schools (in addition to SATS data)
- Gathering specific SEND information from primary schools
- Gathering views from parents and children
- Assessing every child using the NGRT reading age test
- Assessing every child using CATS (cognitive abilities) tests

This suite of data allows us to identify which children are significantly behind in the curriculum or significantly below age-related expectations in their cognitive abilities.

Students who meet this criteria have specific SEND induction meetings with the SENDCo before arrival, including parents, children, primary schools and other involved professionals, in which it is agreed which students would benefit from additional support in the nurture group.

All in-year admissions also go through the same data gathering and testing process.

Following each summative data point (December and July), student performance data is reviewed by Heads of Year and the SENDCo in order to flag any child who may have been going “under the radar” and who may benefit from additional support. These children receive additional assessments from our Assistant SENDCo, who is a Level 7 trained Specialist Assessor, to allow for the identification of additional children who may have significant additional cognitive needs and who may also benefit from nurture group teaching.

Similarly, students who make excellent progress in assessments may be moved out of the nurture group if it is deemed that this provision is no longer necessary to meet their needs.

Benefits of Nurture Groups

Each year group has one nurture group, comprised of no more than 20 learners. The groups are specifically designed for students who have the biggest gaps in their learning, and who need the most differentiated curriculum and teaching in order to catch them up. These students usually have a Special Educational Need. There may also be some students in the groups who are new to English as a foreign language and are struggling to access the curriculum.

Because the groups are smaller, the teacher is better placed to meet the individual needs of the learners than if they were in larger classes. Teachers are able to understand the class context very well by having small groups and can adapt learning to suit the students’ needs. Students who need this level of help are often left behind in larger, mainstream classes, leading them to fall further behind. The students themselves often lose confidence in school and their abilities because they feel like they are failing. Nurture groups are able to address this and, through adapted teaching strategies, foster success and achievements for those students.

The benefits of nurture group teaching are:



Ark Burlington Danes Academy

- **A rigorous and sequential curriculum:** Teaching is adapted to suit the class and the subject. Teachers adapt the curriculum, alongside HODs, to ensure that nurture groups are taught the essentials of each subject and so they are successful in achieving the end points in the curriculum. The nurture curriculum is deliberately planned and sequenced by beginning with the basics so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and towards its clearly defined end points, prioritising the development of phonetic and language comprehension skills so that students work towards being able to read at an age-appropriate level, as well as mastering the curriculum content.
- **Reading:** The curriculum for all subjects and all students at BDA is centred around reading. Teachers are trained to use reading strategies to enable students to read and access complex material independently. In the nurture groups, teachers use explicit vocabulary instruction, fluency strategies, reading strategies (such as, skimming and annotating), and sequential comprehension questions to aid understanding of the content. Reading is also encouraged through Form Time; the nurture groups read a 'Class Reader' together, which is selected at an appropriate level to both enjoy reading and to develop those key skills. Form tutors are similarly trained to use reading strategies during 'Class Reader' sessions.
- **Phonics:** The curriculum for nurture groups, particularly in Year 7, is adapted to explicitly teach the foundational decoding skills required for students to become fluent and confident readers who can fully access the curriculum. Rather than narrow the curriculum to make time for intensive phonics instruction to go ahead, students have an adapted curriculum that still provides them with access to the full suite of subjects, but also protects time for them to complete the Ruth Miskin 'Fresh Start' Phonics Programme in Year 7. This is done by adjusting the number of hours allocated to subjects including English, Science, tutor time and French, rather than removing any one subject from their curriculum. The Fresh Start phonics programme provides continuity and progression from the Primary curriculum while meeting the needs of learners in an age-appropriate way.
- **Use of Extra Adults:** Each group also has a Support Teacher, who provides link support to students with EHCs but who also supports the whole class with accessing the curriculum. Being in a smaller group means the Support Teachers are better placed to work with these students and add value to their learning.
- **Training:** Teachers of nurture groups are given specific CPD and 'nurture packs' to ensure they are confident adapting their teaching style and strategies for these classes. In addition, half-termly Quality of Education cycles for SEND provide opportunities for the SEND Teaching and Learning team to give specific observation and feedback to teachers of nurture groups, in order to develop their practice in meeting the needs of students in these groups.
- **Functional Skills:** The small nurture groups in Y10 and Y11 are given additional English or additional Maths, depending on their largest area of need. In these lessons, the students are taught specific communication or numeracy skills needed for study at GCSE, but also for basic comprehension. Some of these students are vulnerable to not achieving a grade 4 in their English Language or Maths GCSE and so complete work towards the English or Maths Functional Skills exams in parallel. This provides each student with a foundational English or Maths qualification that can help them to successfully transition to the post-16 pathway of their choice.



Adapted Teaching

Teachers of nurture groups are provided with training and support to adapt their teaching to meet the varied needs of the learners. These strategies aid students in accessing the curriculum.

The BDA Signature Strategies of Instruction include many strategies that are particularly effective in supporting the needs of students with SEND. These include (but are not limited to):

1. **What to Dos**: clear instructions broken down into manageable steps
2. **Positive framing**: All instructions are given as positive instructions to build relationships with students
3. **Modelling tasks**: Showing students how to succeed at a task by modelling it step-by-step yourself.
4. **Engaging exposition**: Showing passion for our subjects and enthusing students with our emotional connection to the learning
5. **Think Aloud (& Dual Coding)**: orate the thinking process verbally and visually on the whiteboard or under the visualiser, using show call and images to support student comprehension and understanding.
6. **Chunk and sequence**: Break-down knowledge into bite-sized chunks so that learners can access it efficiently, accelerating progress.
7. **Show me (MWBs)** *Using mini whiteboards to carry out whole-class assessment so that you know where all students are in their learning and can differentiate accordingly.*
8. **Retrieval practice**: Regular quizzes of core knowledge to build long-term memory
9. **Scaffolding**: Guidance and structure to support students to successfully meet the demands of the Independent Practice task.
10. **Teacher of literacy**: Deliberately expanding and refining students' vocabulary, comprehension and oracy in all lessons.

To find out more about our whole-school curriculum intent, visit:

<https://burlingtondanes.org/secondary/curriculum-aims>