



# SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

<b>Last Review Date</b>	November 2015	<b>Next Review Date</b>	November 2016
<b>Leader of Policy Review</b>	Mrs. J. Cooper, Mr. C. Ellis		
<b>Associated Policies</b>	Assessment of Learning, ICT Across the Curriculum, Literacy Across the Curriculum, Numeracy Across the Curriculum		

The school views the development of students' skills as the key to unlocking their academic potential and preparing them for lifelong learning. "Good key skills are essential to raise students. The schools that develop key skills make sure they teach these skills as part of learning in all subjects" (Estyn 2006). This overview document, revised annually, provides the context for a range of other strategies and policies.

The general principles are:

- A student will not necessarily learn a skill unless it is taught
- A student will not necessarily acquire a skill unless they can practise it
- A student will not necessarily transfer the use of a skill unless they are given opportunities to do so

Progression in learning and acquiring skills is demonstrated by students through:

- Confidence in using skills across the curriculum
- Use of an enhanced repertoire of skills
- Application of their skills when working independently
- An understanding of how different skills can contribute to their learning and future career

The following sections outline how these principles are applied in practice.

## Key Skills and Essential Skills

Key Skills and Essential Skills have been embedded into the work of departments and are included on the skills poster that is for focusing the learning objectives. All students are assessed in Essential Skills Wales at Level 2 (a small minority take Level 1) as part of the accreditation for the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification in Key Stage 4. In the Sixth Form it is offered either discretely at Level 2 or 3, as well as within the optional Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification. For entry into Higher Education, discrete skills qualifications can attract a UCAS points score.

## Basic Skills

The school has held the Basic Skills Quality Mark since 1998, being one of the first schools in North Wales to receive accreditation.

In KS3 all students working below Level 4 receive intervention to enable them to advance their Literacy and Numeracy skills. This is monitored throughout the key stage and reported upon at the end of Year 9.

In KS4 all students are provided with opportunities to achieve meaningful qualifications in literacy and numeracy, and where this is below the GCSE standard is primarily achieved through Entry Level accreditation.

In the Sixth Form Students on Level 2 courses have access to Entry Level accreditation, although the majority enter for GCSE or Key Skills.

## **Skills Framework**

The school has implemented the Skills Framework across all subjects. All year groups in KS3 follow schemes of work that incorporate skills within all planning.

A whole-school focus on skills in 2008 resulted in all departments adopting a standard skills template incorporating the icons used in subject orders. They also exemplified these skills by reference to subject-specific applications.

In order to promote the revised KS3 skills-based curriculum, Year 7 have a modified homework timetable that incorporates project-based tasks. These tasks also promote the development of a range of skills that are explicitly identified within the task. An annual audit is carried out to ensure suitability of the arrangements and the tasks.

## **Assessment of Skills**

The school's primary form of external assessments for benchmarking is NFER Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs). All students in KS3 and KS4 take paper-based CATs on entry into Year 7 and at the end of Year 9. On-line CATs are taken at the start of Year 12. These tests produce initial performance targets that are used for tracking progress. In KS3 these are in the form of National Curriculum levels, in KS4 as GCSE grades, and in the Sixth Form as AS/A2 grades. In all cases the performance targets are modified based upon subsequent assessment (see Assessment of Learning Policy).

Basic/Key Skills Builder (BKSB) is an on-line diagnostic assessment tool which uses the national standards for numeracy and literacy. It is taken at the start of Year 10 as a means of identifying students to receive intervention during KS4, and at the start of Year 12 as a means of identifying students to receive intervention in the Sixth Form.

## **External Developments and Support**

All Flintshire School Improvement Officers offer advice and support about essential, key and basic skills within the context of their phase or subject area.