



BSL and Deaf studies Curriculum

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The importance of British Sign Language and Deaf Studies

At Blanche Nevile, our bilingual programme, integrating British Sign Language and English, is at the heart of everything we do. It reflects our belief that every student deserves to learn in a way that is meaningful, and fully engaging, allowing them to thrive and reach their full potential.

BSL is more than a language; it is a bridge that connects people, enabling rich and detailed communication without relying solely on spoken words. Here at Blanche Nevile, we see firsthand how BSL empowers our students to express themselves, build relationships, and develop a strong sense of Deaf identity.

Our Deaf Studies programme further supports this journey, helping students explore Deaf culture, history, and community, and giving them the confidence to embrace their identity proudly. By embedding BSL and Deaf Studies into our curriculum, we celebrate linguistic diversity, promote social inclusion, and uphold our commitment to equality.

Learning BSL enriches social connections, supports cognitive and linguistic growth, and opens doors to lifelong opportunities. It helps our students succeed academically, flourish socially, and contribute to strong, inclusive communities.

At Blanche Nevile, we are proud to champion BSL and Deaf Studies, not just as languages or subjects, but as vital parts of our identity, our teaching, and our vision for a more inclusive world.

BSL at Key Stage 3 and 4

At Blanche Nevile, we recognise British Sign Language as a rich, vibrant language and a fundamental part of many of our students' identities. We are committed to ensuring that every student develops the language skills, confidence and fluency needed to communicate effectively, access learning, and participate fully in both Deaf and hearing communities.

Throughout Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, students are taught in groups that reflect their individual BSL language profiles, ensuring that learning is appropriately matched to their stage of development. Teaching is carefully planned to support continuous progression in both receptive and productive language skills, enabling students to develop increasing confidence, accuracy and independence in their use of BSL.

Our curriculum provides opportunities for students to develop a broad range of linguistic skills, including vocabulary acquisition, grammatical understanding, conversational fluency, storytelling, presentation skills, discussion and debate. Students are also encouraged to explore Deaf culture, Deaf history and the wider Deaf community, helping them to develop a strong sense of identity and pride in being Deaf.

As students progress through the school, they have the opportunity to gain nationally recognised BSL qualifications accredited by Ofqual. These qualifications celebrate students' achievements and provide valuable accreditation that can support future education, employment and leadership opportunities within the Deaf community.

Students may work towards:

- Signature Level 1 Award in British Sign Language
- Signature Level 2 Certificate in British Sign Language
- Signature Level 3 Certificate in British Sign Language
- AQA Award in British Sign Language
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The level studied is determined by each student's individual language profile, progress and attainment. Through high-quality teaching, specialist support and meaningful opportunities to use BSL across school life, we aim for every student to become a confident communicator who can advocate for themselves, build positive relationships and engage successfully with the world around them.

Deaf studies at Key Stage 3 & 4

At Blanche Nevile School, we are proud to offer a Deaf Studies curriculum, designed specifically to support our Deaf students in developing a strong sense of Deaf identity, belonging and pride. We believe that understanding the history, language, culture and experiences of Deaf people is an essential part of growing into a confident and empowered young person.

Deaf Studies goes beyond learning facts about Deaf history. It provides students with opportunities to explore who they are, where they belong and the rich community and culture of which they are a part. Through learning about Deaf role models, significant events, achievements and the development of Deaf communities, students develop a deeper understanding of their own identity and the diverse experiences of Deaf people.

Our curriculum explores the richness and diversity of Deaf culture, including language, communication, technology, education, community, advocacy and the changing experiences of Deaf people over time. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences, challenge misconceptions and stereotypes, and develop the confidence to advocate for themselves and others.

A strong understanding of Deaf identity can play an important role in developing self-esteem, resilience, belonging and emotional well-being. Deaf Studies provides a dedicated space for students to celebrate their identity, recognise the achievements and contributions of Deaf people, and see positive Deaf role models within their own community and beyond.

Students also develop an understanding of the relationship between Deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing communities. They explore barriers to communication and participation, as well as the importance of accessibility, inclusion and equality. In doing so, students develop the knowledge and confidence to contribute positively to a more inclusive society.

At Key Stages 3 and 4, students follow our bespoke programme, exploring themes including Deaf identity and culture, Deaf history, language and communication, technology and accessibility, Deaf community and society, advocacy, rights and representation. Learning becomes increasingly reflective and critical as students consider how Deaf people have shaped, and continue to shape, their communities and the wider world.

We aim to ensure that every student has the opportunity to understand, celebrate and take pride in their Deaf identity, while developing the knowledge, confidence and self-advocacy skills needed to navigate and contribute to the wider world.



**BLANCHE
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SCHOOL**

The Best of Both Worlds
for Deaf children