



LONGWILL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

CURRICULUM POLICY

A sign-bilingual, ambitious and bespoke curriculum for Deaf children

SEPTEMBER 2026

Document control	Current position
School	Longwill School for the Deaf, Bell Hill, Birmingham B31 1LD
Policy owner	Jessica Rosser, Headteacher
Curriculum planning platform	Curriculum Maestro
Issue date	September 2026
Status	Headteacher-issued policy for Governing Body ratification
Next review	September 2027, or earlier following statutory or significant curriculum change
Publication	School website; accessible formats available on request

Safeguarding, language access, Deaf identity and children's rights run through the whole curriculum.

Contents

- Policy statement
- 1. Purpose, scope and statutory framework
- 2. Curriculum intent
- 3. Curriculum structure and planning
- 4. Language, communication and literacy
- 5. Longwill's specialist curriculum
- 6. Teaching, learning and inclusion
- 7. Assessment and progress
- 8. Enrichment, physical development and preparation for adulthood
- 9. Roles, leadership and accountability
- 10. Monitoring, evaluation and review
- Appendix A - Curriculum and assessment overview
- Appendix B - Official sources
- Approval record

Our curriculum promise

Longwill will never mistake limited access to spoken or written English for limited thinking. Pupils will be taught and assessed through language and communication that allow them to show what they know, understand and can do.

Policy statement

Longwill School for the Deaf provides an ambitious, broad, balanced and coherent curriculum for Deaf children aged 2-11. The curriculum follows the Early Years Foundation Stage and National Curriculum in England, while being deliberately adapted and enriched to secure full language access, strong academic learning, Deaf identity, independence, wellbeing and preparation for later life.

Our curriculum is bespoke because our pupils' starting points, language histories, communication profiles, audiological needs and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes differ. Bespoke does not mean less ambitious. Teachers identify the essential knowledge, vocabulary, concepts and skills pupils need, sequence these carefully and remove barriers so each child can achieve as highly as possible.

Sign-bilingual practice

BSL and English are used in parallel according to each pupil's communication profile. Every lesson is language rich and visually accessible; every pupil is entitled to understand, participate, question, explain and demonstrate learning.

1. Purpose, scope and statutory framework

This policy explains how the school designs, teaches, assesses and reviews its curriculum from the Early Years Foundation Stage through Key Stages 1 and 2. It applies to classroom teaching, specialist teaching, therapies integrated into education, educational visits, assemblies, clubs, sport, swimming, cultural experiences, home learning and transition.

1.1 Statutory framework

The policy has been prepared with regard to the Education Act 2002; the National Curriculum in England; the statutory EYFS framework; the Children and Families Act 2014; the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years; the Equality Act 2010; statutory relationships and health education requirements; safeguarding guidance; and current statutory assessment arrangements.

National Curriculum programmes of study provide the entitlement and reference point for subject content and progression. Where an individual pupil cannot access all or part of a programme because of special educational need or disability, any modification or disapplication will be lawful, proportionate, documented and linked to the pupil's EHCP or other authorised arrangement. Expectations will remain high and breadth will be protected.

1.2 Related school documents

This policy should be read with the Teaching and Learning Policy, SEND Information Report, Accessibility Plan, Assessment Policy, RHSE Policy, RE Policy, Reading and Phonics Policy, Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Educational Visits Policy, Equality Information and Objectives, Audiology Policy and subject curriculum documentation.

2. Curriculum intent

Our purpose is to equip Deaf children with the knowledge, skills, language and self-belief to lead happy, independent and fulfilling lives. The curriculum develops pupils who can participate confidently in Deaf and hearing communities, understand their rights, advocate for access and continue learning successfully at secondary school.

2.1 Curriculum aims

- Secure strong foundations in communication, language, literacy and mathematics.
- Teach the knowledge and skills of the National Curriculum and EYFS through coherent, cumulative sequences.
- Develop fluent and confident BSL alongside English, respecting each pupil's language profile and family context.
- Promote pride in Deaf identity, knowledge of Deaf culture and history, and access to qualified Deaf adults and role models.
- Build audiological understanding, self-advocacy and the practical skills needed to manage hearing technology and communication environments.
- Develop physical confidence, creativity, health, water safety, emotional wellbeing and positive relationships.
- Provide rich experiences, visits, literature, arts, technology and encounters that expand cultural capital and future aspirations.
- Teach pupils to be curious, independent, respectful, resilient and active members of their community, reflecting the school's values.
- Prepare pupils for transition, increasing independence and life in modern Britain while protecting their right to a strong Deaf identity.

2.2 Golden threads

Safeguarding, children's rights, equality, diversity, language access, reading, vocabulary, oracy/signacy, wellbeing, digital safety, independence and pupil voice are developed across subjects rather than confined to isolated lessons. The curriculum reflects Articles 2, 3, 6, 12, 13, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30 and 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3. Curriculum structure and planning

3.1 Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the early years follow the statutory EYFS framework. Teaching is play based, language rich, highly visual and experiential. Adults prioritise secure relationships, communication and language, physical development, personal and emotional development, early literacy and mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts. Deaf identity, BSL, audiology and family partnership are embedded from entry.

3.2 Key Stages 1 and 2

Pupils are taught English, mathematics and science and the National Curriculum foundation subjects: art and design, computing, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and, at Key Stage 2 where applicable, languages. The school also provides religious education, relationships and health education, PSHE/citizenship and any primary sex education agreed through the relevant policy.

BSL, Deaf Studies and audiology are additional core features of Longwill's specialist curriculum. They are planned, taught, assessed and reviewed with the same seriousness as other subjects.

3.3 Curriculum Maestro

Curriculum Maestro is the school's principal platform for long-term and medium-term curriculum planning. It supports subject coverage, knowledge and skills progression, sequencing, assessment and leadership oversight from Nursery to Year 6. Teachers use Maestro to adopt, adapt and design projects that meet National Curriculum requirements and Longwill's context.

Maestro supports professional planning; it does not replace teacher judgement. Staff adapt content, vocabulary, examples, pacing, practical experience, BSL resources and assessment so that learning is meaningful and accessible. Subject leaders check that adaptation preserves the intended knowledge and progression and does not create gaps or unnecessary repetition.

3.4 Planning expectations

- Long-term plans show entitlement, sequence, breadth, opportunities for revisiting and the place of specialist Deaf curriculum content.
- Medium-term plans identify prior learning, intended knowledge and skills, key vocabulary in BSL and English, common misconceptions, resources, assessment opportunities and meaningful local or cultural links.

- Short-term teaching responds to assessment. Teachers make the language, visual, practical and cognitive adaptations required by the pupils in front of them.
- Planning identifies reasonable adjustments, EHCP links and specialist support without reducing the subject's intellectual purpose.
- Educational visits, visitors, Deaf role models, performance, outdoor learning and community links are planned where they deepen knowledge rather than acting as disconnected activities.

4. Language, communication and literacy

4.1 Sign-bilingualism

Language is both the means of access and an object of study. Staff use BSL, spoken English, Sign Supported English, written English, visual supports and assistive technology in accordance with the pupil's communication profile. They check understanding rather than assuming that attention, copying or speech production demonstrates comprehension.

Teachers explicitly teach subject vocabulary and concepts in BSL and English, including fingerspelling and accurate technical signs. Pupils have frequent opportunities to discuss, sign, explain, reason, debate, present, rehearse and revisit language before recording learning.

4.2 Early reading and phonics

School phonics programme

Longwill uses the DfE-validated Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised systematic synthetic phonics programme for phonics and reading. It is taught with fidelity to the programme's grapheme-phoneme correspondence progression, with carefully matched Little Wandle decodable reading materials and assessment. [Little Wandle website](#)

Visual Phonics continues to be used as an accessibility approach alongside the Little Wandle sequence.

Hand cues and visual information help pupils attend to and represent the articulatory and phonological features of sounds. Visual Phonics does not replace the validated SSP programme or introduce a competing progression.

- Daily phonics teaching is direct, cumulative and responsive, with additional practice for pupils who need it.
- Reading books used for decoding practice match the sounds and common exception words already taught.
- Phonics assessment identifies what pupils know securely and the precise next content to teach; intervention follows the same programme and terminology.
- Older pupils who have not secured decoding receive age-respectful, systematic support without losing access to ambitious stories, information and the wider curriculum.
- Teachers consider the effect of each pupil's hearing profile, language experience, speech perception and working memory, while maintaining ambitious reading goals.

4.3 Reading, writing and literature

Pupils encounter high-quality, diverse literature and information through accessible English and BSL. Reading for pleasure is promoted through class texts, signed stories, libraries, author and storyteller experiences, home partnership and adult modelling. Comprehension is developed through language, background knowledge, vocabulary, inference and discussion as well as accurate decoding.

Writing teaching develops composition, transcription, grammar, spelling, handwriting or an appropriate alternative, and the ability to communicate for real purposes. Twinkl is used to support the teaching of handwriting. Staff distinguish a pupil's subject understanding from the current level of written English and provide suitable ways to demonstrate both.

5. Longwill's specialist curriculum

5.1 British Sign Language

BSL is taught as a planned subject and used as a language of instruction. Qualified Deaf staff lead the BSL curriculum, providing expert language models and authentic access to Deaf culture and community.

Progression includes receptive and productive language, grammar, vocabulary, fingerspelling, narrative, presentation, interaction, translation awareness and appropriate register.

The school aims for pupils to leave Year 6 with at least Level 1 BSL accreditation and, where starting point, readiness and individual pathway allow, Level 2. Accreditation is supported by ongoing classroom assessment and should recognise genuine communicative competence rather than test rehearsal alone.

5.2 Deaf Studies

Deaf Studies develops pride, belonging and informed choice. Pupils learn about Deaf history, culture, communities, rights, language, arts, sport, technology and diverse Deaf lives in Britain and internationally.

They encounter Deaf role models and explore identity respectfully, recognising that pupils and families may use different languages, technologies and ways of describing deafness.

5.3 Audiology curriculum

The audiology curriculum builds age-appropriate knowledge and independence. Pupils learn about their own hearing profile and communication preferences; the purpose and safe care of hearing aids, cochlear implant processors, bone-conduction devices and radio/remote-microphone systems where used; basic checks and problem reporting; batteries/charging; acoustics and listening conditions; audiograms at an appropriate level; and how to request access or repair support.

Audiology teaching is practical, rights based and non-medicalising. Technology is presented as one possible access tool, not a measure of identity or effort. Pupils are never blamed for device faults or choosing an agreed communication approach. Individual clinical advice and the school's Audiology Policy take precedence for specific equipment and procedures.

5.4 Personal development and independence

RHE, PSHE, citizenship, safeguarding, online safety, emotional literacy and independence teaching help pupils recognise healthy relationships, communicate boundaries, seek help, travel and participate safely, understand money and routines, manage belongings and equipment, resolve conflict and advocate for reasonable adjustments. Content is accessible in BSL and English and sensitive to developmental and safeguarding needs.

6. Teaching, learning and inclusion

6.1 High-quality teaching for Deaf pupils

- Secure visual attention before giving information and maintain clear sight lines to teachers, peers, interpreters, displays and demonstrations.
- Manage lighting, background noise, seating, turn taking and classroom acoustics, and use hearing technology as specified in individual plans.
- Pre-teach and revisit essential vocabulary and background knowledge; use models, images, objects, diagrams, practical work and demonstrations purposefully.
- Chunk information without diluting content; allow processing and translation time; check understanding through explanation and application.
- Use retrieval, spaced practice, worked examples, guided practice and feedback so important knowledge moves into long-term memory.
- Provide accessible ways to record learning, while explicitly teaching pupils to become increasingly independent in the formats they will need next.
- Ensure assessment captures subject knowledge as well as the pupil's current BSL and English development.

6.2 EHCPs, reasonable adjustments and therapies

EHCP outcomes and specialist advice inform teaching, communication, equipment, environment and intervention. Therapy and targeted support should strengthen access to the curriculum and be coordinated so that pupils do not routinely miss the same subjects or lose entitlement to a broad education.

The curriculum is adapted through reasonable adjustments, scaffolding and carefully selected teaching pathways. Pupils are not placed on a permanently narrowed curriculum solely because attainment is below age-related expectations. Decisions about breadth and accreditation are reviewed with the pupil and family and are based on long-term benefit.

6.3 Equality, diversity and representation

Resources and curriculum choices reflect different cultures, ethnicities, religions, families, disabilities, genders and identities and challenge prejudice and stereotypes. Deaf people appear across the curriculum as artists, scientists, leaders, athletes, professionals and community members-not only in lessons about disability.

7. Assessment and progress

7.1 Principles

Assessment begins with the curriculum: teachers check whether pupils have learned the intended knowledge and skills and use this information to adjust teaching. Assessment is proportionate, purposeful and accessible.

No single score is used to define a pupil or lower future expectations.

Where possible and appropriate, pupils are assessed against National Curriculum and EYFS expectations.

Teachers recognise that a Deaf pupil may understand a concept but not yet express it fully in written or spoken English; evidence may therefore include BSL explanation, practical application, demonstration, structured observation and work produced with agreed access arrangements.

7.2 Longwill assessment pathway

1. Identify the pupil's current curriculum pathway, prior knowledge, communication access and relevant statutory assessment arrangements.
2. Assess learning against the intended EYFS or National Curriculum knowledge and skills wherever this provides a meaningful measure.

3. For pupils working below age-related expectations but engaged in subject-specific study, use the

school's PUAS and PRIMARS assessment measures and bespoke Longwill Progress Statements to identify smaller steps, while retaining clear links to subject learning.

3. Use the statutory pre-key-stage standards at relevant assessment points for pupils working below the standard of national assessments but engaged in subject-specific study.

5. Use the statutory engagement model for pupils at KS1 or KS2 who are working below National

Curriculum level and are not engaged in subject-specific study, considering exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence and initiation.

4. Track EHCP outcomes, BSL, Deaf Studies, audiology, personal development, physical development and independence through the relevant specialist frameworks and evidence.

Assessment system terminology

This policy uses the school's stated names 'PUAS' and 'PRIMARS'. The Curriculum Lead will ensure that the final published version matches the exact names used on Longwill's assessment systems and staff guidance.

7.3 Statutory assessment and access arrangements

The school will administer statutory assessments that apply to each pupil, including the Reception Baseline Assessment, phonics screening check, multiplication tables check and end-of-key-stage assessment, subject to current participation guidance. Decisions not to enter a pupil or to use an alternative statutory standard will be evidence based, lawful and communicated to parents or carers.

Access arrangements will reflect normal classroom practice and current assessment rules. They may include BSL interpretation or communication support where permitted, additional time, rest breaks, a familiar adult, adapted presentation or other approved arrangements. Support must not change what the assessment is intended to measure.

7.4 Recording, moderation and reporting

- Teachers record formative and summative judgements in the agreed school systems, including Maestro where applicable.
- Leaders review attainment, progress, curriculum coverage and the experience of groups at least termly, using small-cohort data cautiously and alongside qualitative evidence.
- Internal and external moderation strengthens consistency. Work, BSL evidence, practical outcomes and assessment decisions are sampled across subjects and pathways.
- Parents and carers receive clear reports on achievements, progress, next steps, attendance and statutory outcomes in accessible language and formats. Pupil voice contributes to review.
- Assessment information supports teaching, intervention, EHCP review, transition and curriculum improvement; it is not used to create artificial progress or excessive workload.

8. Enrichment, physical development and preparation for adulthood

8.1 PE, Dance and swimming

PE and Dance are delivered through accessible, ambitious teaching, including Deaf-led lessons that give pupils direct BSL access, strong role models and opportunities for leadership, creativity, teamwork and performance.

The programme develops fundamental movement, games, gymnastics, athletics, dance, outdoor activity, fitness and personal best, with reasonable adjustments that enable participation.

From September 2026, every pupil will have planned swimming provision, subject to individual health and safety arrangements. Teaching builds water confidence and safety over time. For pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, the school tracks the National Curriculum outcomes: swimming competently, confidently and proficiently for at least 25 metres; using a range of strokes effectively; and performing safe self-rescue in different water-based situations.

8.2 Experiences and cultural capital

Educational visits, residential experiences where offered, arts and performances, outdoor learning, visitors, competitions, clubs, community projects and links with Deaf organisations broaden knowledge and belonging.

Teachers plan the language and background knowledge pupils need before an experience and revisit it afterwards so that enrichment produces lasting learning.

8.3 Transition and future readiness

Transition teaching develops independence, communication, self-advocacy, technology use, organisation, emotional readiness and familiarity with the next setting. Secondary schools receive accurate information about curriculum achievement, BSL/English profile, access arrangements, audiology, successful teaching approaches, EHCP outcomes and the pupil's own views.

Careers and aspiration are developed through real-world curriculum links and encounters with Deaf and hearing adults in varied roles. Pupils learn that there are many successful ways to communicate, contribute and live independently.

9. Roles, leadership and accountability

9.1 Governing Body

The Governing Body approves the policy, assures statutory entitlement and equality, and holds leaders to account for ambition, breadth, quality, safeguarding, resources, staff expertise and outcomes. Governors receive curriculum reports and triangulate information through visits, pupil voice, work and assessment evidence.

9.2 Headteacher

Jessica Rosser, Headteacher, is accountable for curriculum quality and implementation. She ensures clear leadership, suitable staffing and professional development, appropriate time and resources, coherent assessment and honest reporting. Operational responsibilities may be delegated, but accountability remains with the Headteacher and Governing Body.

9.3 Curriculum and subject leaders

Leaders define essential knowledge and progression; support planning and teaching; maintain subject documentation and resources; monitor access, coverage and standards; moderate assessment; identify professional development; and report strengths, gaps and priorities. The BSL, Deaf Studies, audiology, reading/phonics, PE and Dance leads ensure specialist provision is coherent with the whole curriculum.

9.4 Teachers, specialist staff and support staff

Teachers are responsible for ambitious planning, responsive teaching, accurate assessment and communication with families. Qualified Deaf staff lead BSL teaching and contribute cultural and linguistic expertise across the school. Teaching assistants and specialist staff promote access and independence, provide feedback to teachers and avoid completing cognitive work for pupils.

9.5 Pupils and families

Pupils' views shape curriculum evaluation, individual planning and transition. Families share knowledge of language, culture, interests, health and aspiration and are supported to understand curriculum and assessment. School information and meetings are made accessible, including through BSL or interpretation where required.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Curriculum quality is evaluated through planning and coverage reviews, lesson visits, work scrutiny, BSL and practical evidence, assessment and moderation, pupil and family voice, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding information, subject-leader review, governor monitoring and transition outcomes. Leaders consider whether pupils remember and use important knowledge-not simply whether activities were completed.

10.1 Evaluation questions

- Is the curriculum ambitious, broad, coherent and appropriately sequenced for each pathway?
- Can pupils access teaching, peer discussion, resources, assessment and enrichment through their language and communication needs?
- Are National Curriculum and EYFS entitlements secure, with any modification justified and reviewed?
- Do BSL, Deaf Studies and audiology have clear progression, regular teaching and credible assessment?
- Do phonics and reading follow Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised with fidelity, with Visual Phonics strengthening access rather than altering the programme sequence, and is Twinkl used appropriately to support handwriting?
- Are pupils building durable knowledge, language, independence, identity, physical confidence and readiness for the next stage?
- Do assessment systems identify real progress without placing ceilings on pupils or creating unnecessary workload? The policy will be reviewed at least annually and earlier after significant changes to legislation, the National Curriculum, statutory assessment, the school's cohort, staffing, specialist programmes or evaluation findings.

Curriculum documentation may be refined during the year; material changes will be communicated to staff and governors.

Appendix A - Curriculum and assessment overview

Curriculum element	Longwill provision	Assessment and evidence
Early Years	EYFS statutory framework, enriched through sign-bilingual, visual, language-rich and experiential teaching.	EYFS assessment, observation, communication evidence, EHCP outcomes and Longwill small-step statements where helpful.
Core curriculum	English, mathematics and science, planned from National Curriculum programmes of study and adapted through Maestro.	National Curriculum objectives and age-related expectations where appropriate; specialist measures and small-step statements where pupils are working earlier.
Foundation curriculum	Art and design, computing, design and technology, geography, history, music, PE, languages at KS2 where applicable, RE, relationships and health education, PSHE and citizenship.	Subject knowledge and skill progression, practical evidence, pupil voice, work scrutiny and teacher assessment.
Specialist Deaf curriculum	BSL, Deaf Studies, audiology, communication, self-advocacy, Deaf identity and access technology.	Longwill progression statements, BSL assessments/accreditation, functional application and individual EHCP evidence.
Physical development	PE and Dance with Deaf-led teaching; swimming for every pupil from September 2026; health, wellbeing and safe participation.	Skill progression, participation, personal best, swimming and water-safety outcomes, and reasonable adjustments.

Appendix B - Official sources

- DfE: The national curriculum - Key Stages 1 and 2
- DfE: Choosing a phonics teaching programme - validated SSP list
- DfE: The reading framework
- [Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised - programme and resources](#)
- DfE: SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Standards and Testing Agency: Pre-key-stage standards
- Standards and Testing Agency: The engagement model
- DfE: Physical education programmes of study

Approval record

Approval field	Record
Headteacher	Jessica Rosser

Approval field	Record
Issue date	September 2026
Governing Body approval	To be recorded on ratification
Minute reference	To be recorded in the Governing Body minutes
Next review	September 2027