

# CURRICULUM POLICY AND CURRICULUM PLAN

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| Issued by: Lesley Tyler | Title: Executive Director,<br>Curriculum and Professional Excellence |
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### Aims of the policy

1. To explain how the planning of the curriculum supports the school aims
2. To outline the structure and rationale of the curriculum

The curriculum policy and plan is a regulatory requirement of the ISI.

### CURRICULUM AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

***At Benenden, within the complete education we offer, we aim to provide an inspiring and challenging curriculum to develop independent and enquiring learners who can think both critically and creatively. The curriculum should build an environment where questioning, academic risk-taking, and the freedom to learn from mistakes are all encouraged. We offer a relevant curriculum designed to nurture high aspirations, enable strong academic and personal outcomes, and prepare pupils for the opportunities and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both in Britain and globally. Our curriculum should imbue in our pupils these qualities: responsibility, resourcefulness, resilience and a sense that learning can excite and invigorate throughout life.***

Within the framework of a broad and balanced education for each pupil, we intend for our curriculum to allow a high level of personalisation so that each pupil can learn and make progress in ways that play to her strengths, develops specialisms and fosters existing and new interests. Our curriculum takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all Benenden pupils.

The Curriculum Policy should be seen within the overall Aims and Values of the school and is complemented by policy for the provision of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education.

### CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

Our curriculum is designed to allow each pupil to:

- achieve the best possible academic qualifications and standards for her, whatever her ability.
- ensure high levels of engagement, enjoyment and personal development.

We aim for our curriculum to develop pupils who:

- are inducted into the essential knowledge, skills and discourse of subject disciplines and who are able to develop specialisms according to aptitude in the following curriculum areas: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative.
- can appreciate the achievements of women and men in these fields and can experience a sense of personal achievement in these areas during their time at school.
- are resourceful and can transfer skills and make connections between fields of knowledge in order to solve problems
- are resilient in their learning, showing determination and initiative when faced with difficulties, seeking appropriate support when it is needed.
- are reflective learners who understand their strengths and how they can be used; who can identify areas for development and know what to do in order to make progress and who take increasing responsibility for their learning.
- can work effectively in a team but also concentrate for sustained periods of time alone, can organise themselves and manage distractions.
- understand and respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty, and show respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- acquire an understanding of the social, economic, environmental and political aspects of Britain and the wider world, and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations.
- develop the values, skills and behaviours needed to achieve success in both education and employment.

- have the knowledge to develop for themselves an active and healthy lifestyle and a sense of wellbeing.

## **CURRICULUM DELIVERY**

The curriculum should be seen in its widest sense as the entire planned learning experience. This includes formal lessons and planned events, routines, and learning that take place outside the classroom. Although the majority of the pupils' formal learning experiences will be through subject-based lessons, the curriculum is also planned and delivered to address a number of cross-curricular dimensions. These are sometimes dealt with, especially in Years 7-9, through enquiry learning models where conventional lessons are suspended in favour of alternative models or through thematic projects. Additionally, all schemes of work in all subjects take into account the cross-curricular dimensions below and incorporate them into their subject and skills delivery. In IV and UIV (Years 7 and 8) the curriculum is structured around 6 termly concepts which allow for cross-curricular links, enquiry weeks and the delivery of soft skills alongside the acquisition of subject specific knowledge and understanding: we call this The Benenden Diploma (Level 1).

### **The Personal and Professional Development Programme (PPD)**

The PPD is a planned and structured programme, unique to Benenden, that comprises one or two hours per week for each year group and encompasses Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PHSEE) and the SMSC agendas. The content differs depending on the age of the students and their needs.

### **The ACE programme**

Activities in the co-curricular programme, weekend programme and within other structures in the school fall into what we call the ACE programme: a balanced diet of activities whose aims are to nurture and develop the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of the pupils as well as providing a range of opportunities that encourage resilience, reflectiveness and responsibility, allowing pupils to take managed risks and have fun. It offers a wide variety of opportunities for collaboration and leadership.

It is divided into five different headings, though many activities will fall into several areas. The headings are:

- Physical Health and Wellbeing
- Mind and Spirit
- Skills for Life
- Global Citizenship
- Culture and Creativity

The activities are delivered through:

- subject lessons and subject specific extension activities
- cross-curricular projects and enquiry weeks
- co-curricular activities including clubs and extras
- trips, visits and residencies
- the Weekend Programme
- Assemblies ("Prayers") and Form Order
- the lecture and seminar programme
- boarding life

Some activities are compulsory, and for those that are voluntary, pupils are encouraged to participate in activities of each type, challenging themselves and developing new interests. Participation is monitored by Tutors and the Assistant Head Co-Curricular.

**Spiritual, moral, social and cultural**

All departments have a responsibility to nurture social, moral, cultural and spiritual development of the pupils including a duty to ensure that pupils understand fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty, and show respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

**Literacy across the curriculum**

We aim for all of our pupils to become literate and articulate communicators. In all subjects, pupils should be taught to express themselves correctly and appropriately on paper and orally, and to read accurately and with understanding. Pupils should be taught to recognise and use Standard English. In writing, pupils should be taught to use correct spelling and punctuation and follow grammatical conventions. They should also be taught to organise their writing in logical and coherent forms. In speaking, pupils should be taught to use language precisely and cogently. Pupils should be taught to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas and views constructively. In reading, pupils should be taught strategies to help them read with understanding, to locate and use information, to follow a process or argument and summarise, and to synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading. As part of the PPD programme, students are taught strategies to aid revision, including how to retain information long-term for deep understanding.

**Numeracy across the curriculum**

Similarly, all departments are responsible, where appropriate, for developing pupils' numeracy and financial economic understanding when opportunities arise. This can be done through asking pupils to use mental maths, basic mathematical formulae, tables and graphs to present data, estimates and calculations. Wherever possible, opportunities should be taken to allow students to grasp the basics of personal finance and budgeting. Specific lessons to address financial understanding are included in the PPD programme for all Key Stages.

**ICT across the curriculum**

Pupils are given opportunities to apply and develop their digital skills through the use of ICT tools to support their learning in all subjects. All pupils at Benenden have personal devices which can be utilised in all lessons on the wireless campus, and the portal and curriculum areas can support this work wherever the pupils are in the world. Departments are encouraged to use a range of digital tools and resources to support student learning, and all students take computing modules as part of their technology curriculum at KS3, accredited by the IDEA programme. For the Sixth Form, there are opportunities to learn to code and use ICT in workplace scenarios through the Professional Skills Programme.

**Health and Safety**

All departments have a duty to ensure appropriate compliance with health and safety guidelines, but specific responsibilities lie with Science, Technology, Art and Design, and Physical Education. When working with tools, equipment and materials, in practical activities and in different environments, including those that are unfamiliar, pupils should be taught:

- a) about hazards, risks and risk control.
- b) to recognise hazards, assess consequent risks and take steps to control the risks to themselves and others.
- c) to use information to assess the immediate and cumulative risks.
- d) to manage their environment to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others.
- e) to explain the steps they take to control risks.

**ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PERSONALISATION**

In order to ensure every pupil is able to learn and make progress, and is fully engaged in her learning, we offer a high level of personalisation within the curriculum, depending on the needs of each individual pupil. This happens in a number of different ways:

**Number and Combination of Subjects Studied**

At Key Stage 3 (IV-LV) pupils study a broad and balanced curriculum and experience a range of up to 17 subjects across the 32 hour week. Occasionally a pupil's curriculum will be personalised to allow for a gift or talent to be pursued in more depth, or to allow for consolidation and support, or to allow some space in the day for those whose wellbeing requires it. This personalisation might take the form of one or more subjects being dropped, or one subject taking up extra time.

The number of options a pupil chooses at GCSE and A Level will be dependent on her skills, abilities and interests. The decision about numbers of subjects is made after consultation with the pupil, her parents, and a range of staff and over seen by Deputy Head Academic. Some pupils will review and change their programme of study during the course of a year to ensure they have an appropriate curriculum.

**Languages**

Each pupil has a choice of languages in IV, UIV and LV and students study one or two languages from Mandarin, French and Spanish. Pupils from IV-LV also study Latin or Classical Studies. These languages are all on offer to A Level. Pupils are set according to their ability and experience. A bilingual pupil or pupil with exceptional linguistic ability may be given appropriate tuition if they so wish and a range of other languages such as Italian, Russian, German, Arabic and Polish are available as paid extras. We expect every girl to take a modern language for GCSE except in exceptional circumstances.

**Academic Support and SEND**

Some pupils come into the school with an identified additional learning need, and some pupils are identified whilst at the school as having an additional learning need. If a need is identified, further tests are given and with the parents' agreement, the pupil is offered lessons with the Academic Support Department and given a personalised learning programme (known at Benenden as "teaching points"). This would also apply to pupils with an EHC. This is circulated to each pupil's teachers to be addressed during lessons. In some cases, pupils are assessed as needing extra time or laptop use in examinations. Every teacher is aware of pupils on the Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) register, and differentiates for them appropriately within taught lessons. This provision and the progress of the pupils on the register is monitored by the SENDCo and the Academic Support department. Pupils can be recommended for academic support at any time by teachers, Hms, Tutors or parents. Those students identified as in need of English as an Additional Language (EAL) support are provided with weekly lessons and their progress monitored by the Academic Support Department. Pupils on the SEND register or with EAL have full access to the curriculum, but may be offered the chance to personalise their programme to allow for the core subjects and skills to be consolidated.

**Most Able**

Annually, departments identify pupils who are currently most able within their areas. This includes pupils who have come into the school as scholars or who have been awarded an honorary scholarship after entry, pupils identified by subject teachers and pupils with high overall MidYIS scores. Teachers differentiate for these pupils appropriately within lessons and there are subject extension programmes and a scholarship programme of special events designed to challenge and nurture creative, critical and connective thinking. The progress of those on the register is monitored by the Scholarship Mentors in addition to the usual means.

**Setting**

Setting by experience and current ability takes place from Year 7 (IV) in Languages, Mathematics, Latin and additionally after LV (Year 9), in Science. English set pupils in V and UV (Year 10 and 11). In all other subjects, pupils' needs are differentiated for within the lesson through a variety of strategies. Movement between sets (divs) is facilitated by timetabling, meaning a pupil can move up or down a set if their progress requires this.

## **REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Religious Education**

Benenden chooses to respond to the legal requirement in maintained schools to teach Religious Education. At Key Stage 3 pupils receive weekly lessons in Philosophy and Religion (PR). At KS4 pupils receive Religious Education through lessons if they have chosen PR as an option; all pupils attend assembly several times each week and have occasional talks and lectures. There is a regular Sunday Service which is Anglican in format.

All pupils at Benenden receive Personal, Social, Health and Economic education through the PPD programme. The PSHEE programme specifically encourages pupils to respect other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) under the Equality Act 2010.

At Key Stage 3 Pupils in IV and UIV receive weekly lessons of PSHEE, including drugs, alcohol and Relationships and Sex Education. In LV (Year 9) this is delivered through a carousel programme. There is a Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education Policy. ([PSHEE Policy.](#)) PSHEE is delivered at KS4 and KS5 through lectures and through the PPD Programme.

Economic education is delivered through a focus on personal finance and enterprise both within the PPD Programme and through standalone activities which happen when the normal timetable is suspended, eg through Enterprise Days or Enquiry Weeks.

At Benenden, pupils in all year groups, including Sixth Form, receive a minimum of three hours' sport each week, significantly exceeding the minimum recommendation to schools that 85 per cent of pupils aged 5-16 take part in a minimum of two hours' high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum each week.

Computing (regulatory in maintained schools from 2014) is taught as a discrete subject to Years 7-9 (IV-LV) from September 2014, as part of the offering in Technology. Computer Science GCSE is offered as part of the GCSE options programme.

Food and nutrition (regulatory in maintained schools from 2010) is delivered through aspects of Sport, Biology and the co-curricular programme.

Careers education is provided to all pupils from IV to VI2 through the PPD Programme, through curriculum suspension days and through a programme of visiting speakers and special events such as the Careers Fair. The aim of the programme is to provide balanced, objective advice that encourages all pupils to be aspirational and to build on personal strengths and interests, with a growing understanding of the variety and challenges of the employment market both in Britain and globally. We meet and adhere to the Gatsby benchmarks. There is a separate Careers Policy. ([Careers Policy.](#))

## **MONITORING**

Responsibility for the effective implementation of the policy lies with the Headmistress who delegates to the Deputy Head Academic and the Executive Director: Curriculum and Professional Excellence. Heads of Department, Housemasters and Housemistresses, Heads of Year, Tutors and individual subject teachers also have a key role to play. The policy is supported by schemes of work developed by individual departments, summaries of which can be found on the school Portal.

The curriculum provision is reviewed annually at SMT and through Heads of Department meetings as well as discussed at various academic forums.

Evidence for the effective implementation of the policy can be found in:

- the curriculum plan
- pupil timetables
- pupil questionnaires
- programmes of study and schemes of work
- lesson observations and pupil shadowing
- work scrutiny
- related policies.

## **CURRICULUM PLAN**

**Details of how the curriculum is delivered through the structured timetable and allocation of time per subject.**

**The subjects and their timetable allocations are based on a 32 hour week, with six 55 minute lessons per day Monday to Friday and two hours on Saturdays. Where we have exeat weekends or holidays, we run a compressed day of lessons on a Friday, with five 45 minute lessons.**

### **The Key Stage 3 Curriculum (Fourth, Upper Fourth and Lower Fifth)**

All pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects in the Lower School. We admit between 40 and 45 pupils in each of the Fourth (Year 7) and Upper Fourth (Year 8), and all study assessed courses in English, Mathematics, Science, Modern Foreign Languages, Latin, Philosophy and Religion, History, Geography, Art, Technology, Music and Drama. Pupils also receive tuition in the PPD Programme and Sport and have some time allocated in their timetables to Private Study and reading for pleasure.

In Fourth and Upper Fourth the pupils follow the Benenden Diploma Level 1, which is a planned and progressive two year curriculum which comprises single subject lessons as above, but also cross-curricular experiences which are themed each term. The themes in the IV are currently Identity, Journeys and Change. In the UIV the themes are Growth, Celebrations and Rites and Around the World in 80 Days. The lessons in the Diploma are investigative and exploratory in focus and designed to deliver skills in resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and collaboration as well as to deliver subject specific skills and knowledge. Pupils will also complete an individual Extended Project, deliver a viva and take part in planned co-curricular activities which fulfil the five headings of the ACE Programme.

In the Lower Fifth (Year 9), when approximately 50 new pupils join the year group, all our pupils study assessed courses in English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, one or two Modern Foreign Languages, Latin or Classical Studies, Philosophy and Religion, History, Geography, Art, Technology, Music and Drama. Some students will add a third modern language or Classical Greek to their programme All have Sport, PPD and some time allocated to Private Study.

Pupils in IV, UIV and LV are taught in form groups with the exception of Mathematics, Latin and Languages, where pupils are divided into “divs” (sets) based on their ability in each subject. Option choices for GCSE are made in February of the Spring term.

### **The Key Stage 4 Curriculum (Fifth and Upper Fifth Forms)**

The Fifth and Upper Fifth (Years 10 and 11) curriculum is structured around tuition towards GCSEs. All pupils study a compulsory core:

- English Language and Literature
- Mathematics
- Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics or Science and Additional Science)
- A Modern Foreign Language (with some exceptions)
- The PPD Programme which includes Critical Thinking, Global Awareness, Personal Finance, Careers Education and Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
- Sport

Pupils choose between two and five other option subjects, the number and selection being chosen after guidance from the school and parents:-

- French
- Spanish
- Mandarin
- Latin
- Greek
- Classical Civilisation
- Philosophy and Religion
- History
- Geography
- Art and Design
- Music
- Drama
- Design Technology
- Computer Science
- Physical Education
- Higher Project
- Other languages by arrangement

The following table illustrates the number of hours allocated to each subject for each year group in the Lower School (Years 7-11) each week. The number of hours of private study available is determined by the number of options chosen.

| Year Group                            | 7 (IV) | 8 (UIV) | 9 (LV)                         | 10 (V)                                       | 11 (UV)                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| English                               | 3      | 3       | 3                              | 4  | 4  |
| Mathematics                           | 3      | 3       | 3                              | 4  | 3  |
| Biology                               | 3      | 3       | 3                              | 2  | 2  |
| Chemistry                             |        |         |                                | 2  | 2  |
| Physics                               |        |         |                                | 2  | 2  |
| Language 1                            | 2      | 2       | 2                              | 2  | 2  |
| Language 2                            | 2      | 2       | 2 (optional)                   | 4, 6 or 8 –<br>2 hours per<br>option subject | 4, 6 or 8 –<br>2 hours per<br>option subject |
| Latin                                 | 2      | 2       | 2 (Latin or Classical Studies) |  |  |
| Religious Studies                     | 1      | 1       | 1                              |  |  |
| Geography                             | 1      | 1       | 1                              |  |  |
| History                               | 1      | 1       | 1                              |  |  |
| Art/ Photography                      | 1      | 1       | 1                              |  |  |
| Technology: DT and Computing          | 2      | 2       | 2                              |  |  |
| Computer Science                      |        |         |                                |  |  |
| Music                                 | 1      | 1       | 1                              |  |  |
| Drama                                 | 1      | 1       | 1                              |  |  |
| Friday options                        | 1      | 1       | 1                              |  |  |
| Sport                                 | 4      | 4       | 4                              | 4  | 3  |
| Personal and Professional Development | 2      | 2       | 2                              | 1  | 1  |
| Private Study/ Reading                | 2      | 2       | 2                              | 7,5 or 3                                     | 7 or 5 or 3                                  |
| Total                                 | 32     | 32      | 32                             | 32   | 32   |

### **The Key Stage 5 Curriculum (Sixth Form)**

Sixth Form pupils choose between three and five subjects to study at A Level, some taking a standalone AS Level alongside the three or four full A Levels. Subjects currently on offer are:

- English Literature
- English Language and Literature
- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics\*
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Psychology
- French
- Mandarin
- Spanish
- Other languages by arrangement eg German, Italian, Russian
- Latin
- Greek
- Religious Studies
- History
- Politics
- Geography
- Economics
- Art and Design
- History of Art
- Design and Technology
- Music
- Theatre Studies
- Physical Education
- Extended Project Level 3

*\* Further Mathematics is only available if Mathematics is taken.*

(Subjects run if there is sufficient take-up).

In addition, all pupils must attend lessons in the following disciplines:

- Sport - three hours per week
- Professional Skills programme – 1 hour per week

The Professional Skills Programme teaches a range of skills for employment and life beyond school. It is delivered by teachers and outside providers such as graduate recruitment specialists and industry professionals. Topics include CV writing, Interview Technique, Using LinkedIn, Entrepreneurship, a TEFL course, Coding, Presentation Skills, Employment Law and Wellbeing in the Workplace.

At all stages of her school career, a pupil's curriculum is reviewed and personalised to ensure she can learn effectively and make progress.