
Teaching and Curriculum Policy

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1 Policy Statement

Birkdale School is committed to providing a rigorous academic and intellectual education from aged 4 to 18. This aims to challenge and engage pupils, offer continuity and progression of learning to foster a life-long love of learning for its own sake and provide them with a secure foundation on which to continue into Higher Education and into the careers of their choice.

At Birkdale School, we aim to provide a broad curriculum, at all key stages, enabling pupils to acquire skills in thinking, speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy, and gain experience in scientific, technological, social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. All pupils cover the National Curriculum subject areas for Reception, Key Stage 1 and 2 plus valuable additional subjects that provide depth and breadth to the curriculum such as Drama, Swimming and 2 Modern Foreign Languages. In Senior School, almost all pupils study a core curriculum of Mathematics, English, Science and a Modern Language until the end of Key Stage 4. Opportunities for choice occur in S2 (when pupils choose to undertake one or two Modern Foreign Languages in S3, alongside two or four creative subjects respectively), as well as in S3 and S4 (prior to their commencement of GCSE and A Level courses). Quite deliberately, the school chooses each year to construct timetables around pupils' choices, and not the other way around; thus there are no predetermined "Option Bands". The School aims to run any course in which there is sufficient demand.

All curriculum subject matter is appropriate for the age and aptitudes of the pupils in each school year. We aim to ensure pupils with English as an Additional Language and any pupils with a statement of special needs or disability are effectively supported, whilst more-able pupils are stretched and challenged. Our curriculum provision enables all pupils to have the opportunity to learn and make progress including those with educational special needs.

The PSHE curriculum reflects the schools' aims and ethos. Great care is taken to encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. One of the core values of the school is 'care and respect for all'. This is promoted in academic lessons, in extra-curricular activities, through House activities, through pastoral time and Assemblies. PSHE is taught formally in all year groups in the Prep School and from S1-S5 in one form time per week but elements of this curriculum are covered within the teaching of other academic subjects in the Prep and Senior School (Careers, Economic Awareness, Health Education, Substance Abuse, Political Systems and Religious Education) and in the Sixth Form Enrichment. Form Tutor periods and Assemblies are also used for this purpose.

In Senior School the curriculum provides for pupils to receive access to accurate, up to date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner, enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential (see Careers Policy). The Careers Department provide bespoke support through meeting with pupils on a one to one basis where required.

The curriculum ensures the effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

The school actively promotes the British values:

- Democracy
- Rule of law
- Respect and tolerance
- Individual liberty

2 Aims

- a) To assist in the raising of standards with the intention, where possible, to achieve exceptional levels of attainment, enabling them to achieve their personal best.
- b) To support the quality of both teaching and learning
- c) To increase the continuity, progression and balance of the curriculum
- d) To nurture pupils to demonstrate excellent concentration and application skills.
- e) Foster a love of learning, self-esteem and personal responsibility, linked to respect for the needs and feelings of others and therefore engender considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- f) Provides pupils with experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.
- g) Pupils develop speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.
- h) Develop confident, disciplined and enquiring learners, able to make informed choices.
- i) Foster a love of learning, self-esteem and personal responsibility, linked to respect for the needs and feelings of others and therefore engender considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- j) Ensure equal opportunities in relation to gender, race, class, special needs and belief and encourage value and respect of all cultures.
- k) Promote a thoughtful attitude towards the immediate and wider environment.

The curriculum offers:

Breadth allows the following areas of learning (including, knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes):

- Aesthetic and Creative
- Language and Literacy
- Science and Technology
- Moral, Spiritual and Social
- Mathematics
- Humanities

Balance

- Variety of experience offered to pupils
- Variety of teaching approaches

Progression and Continuity (Teaching and learning experiences are ordered to facilitate pupil progress):

- Build on existing knowledge
- Build on existing skills

Relevance

- Meets the present and prospective needs of the pupils

Pupils Learning Experiences

Pupils are given opportunities to acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practice skills through:

- Gaining firsthand experience, engaging in investigative work and communicating their findings in a variety of ways
- Engaging in a variety of problem solving activities
- Making choices and being encouraged to organise their own learning and where appropriate supported in improving their work

- Designing, making and evaluating
- Working individually and as members of a co-operative group
- Producing work for a variety of audiences
- Using a variety of media and select resources appropriately
- Practising new skills
- Establishing a positive attitude towards learning
- Applying concepts to new situations
- Acquiring a sense of wellbeing and concern for others

Pupils' Learning Styles

Pupils' learning styles should include:

- Independent learning
- Whole class teaching
- Researching/data collection
- Answering questions
- Talking about/explaining work
- Reading and reflecting
- Working collectively as a member of a group
- Collaborative learning in pairs
- Working using their own, teachers', peers' ideas
- Using various technology
- Acting and role play
- Observing and listening

Teaching and Learning ethos

Teachers will provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which will develop the skills, concepts and knowledge necessary for future learning. In the course of their daily work the staff will contribute to the development of this ethos through:

Providing a calm, quiet and effective working environment, when appropriate, in which each child can achieve their maximum potential in a welcoming environment, where courtesy, kindness and respect are fostered.

The learning environment should:

- Be inspiring
- Promote effective learning and personal development
- Enable pupils to begin to select materials appropriate to the task in hand
- Facilitate both independent and co-operative work by pupils
- Ensure that available space and materials are used to the best advantage
- Ensure that the resources for learning are effectively stored, displayed and labelled
- Display current work and themes appropriate to learning and effort
- Encourage pupils to take increasing responsibility for their environment (including resources and the property of others)
- Give pupils responsibility for looking after their own belongings
- Reduce waste
- Provide positive role models
- Provide a fair and disciplined environment, in line with the school's Behaviour, Sanctions and Rewards Policy
- Develop links with the wider community

- Provide children with meaningful, purposeful tasks related to the programmes of study
- Value and celebrate pupils' successes and achievements
- Provide the opportunity to explore issues and topics within and beyond the framework of the National Curriculum.

Teachers' Responsibilities

The teacher should:

- Have the highest expectations of all pupils
- Effectively check pupils understanding and intervene when necessary
- Precisely target adult support where appropriate
- Plan yearly, termly and weekly with clear objectives
- Have a secure command of the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills
- Ensure continuity, progression and differentiation (where appropriate) for all the pupils
- Assess regularly to evaluate pupils knowledge and skills (to inform planning and reporting to parents
- Keep school records up to date
- Meet regularly to share knowledge of the delivery of the curriculum and how pupils are progressing

The quality of teaching should demonstrate that:

- Teachers have clear objectives for their lessons
- Pupils are aware of these objectives
- Teachers have a secure command and an excellent knowledge of the subject
- Teaching methods engage, motivate and challenge all pupils
- There is an awareness of pupils' capabilities and prior learning/understanding

Resources

Resources should at all times be:

- Sufficient to enable the delivery of the curriculum
- Be of a good quality
- Regularly audited by the subject coordinator, Head of Department and teacher

Each classroom will be equipped with a set of resources and books appropriate to the year groups taught in that room. Some rooms act as a specific subject base monitored and regularly audited by the Curricular Adviser/Head of Department. In the Senior School, subject specific resources are held within departmental areas.

Pupils are taught and encouraged to use resources correctly and safely with care and respect particularly with regard to the Health and Safety Policy of the school.

Care will be taken to ensure that resources reflect the cultural diversity of our society and that all pupils have equality of access.

Teaching and Learning

In order to ensure equality of access and effective matching of tasks to needs teachers will employ a variety of strategies:

- Discussion and questioning
- Previewing and reviewing
- Didactic teaching
- Interactive teaching
- Listening
- Providing opportunities for reflection
- Demonstrating high expectations
- Repetition and reinforcement
- Encouragement and positive reinforcement
- Making judgements
- Responding to individual need
- Provide all with opportunities for success
- Use a range of communication strategies – verbal and non-verbal.

Teachers may use a range of strategies in any one lesson.

Activities should show a balance in terms of individual, group and whole class work.

Children develop at different stages and rates and learn in different ways. In the course of learning children develop skills through a variety of processes. These include:

- Investigation
- Experimentation
- Listening
- Observation
- Talking and discussion
- Asking questions
- Practical exploration and role play
- Problem Solving
- Repetition
- Imagining
- Retrieving information
- Decision making

Teachers will differentiate the curriculum by:

- Task
- Outcome
- Support
- Questioning
- Feedback
- Scaffolding
- Student roles and responsibilities
- Grouping

3 Pre-Prep Department (YR to Year 2)

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Time Allocation (PP1 – Reception)

Area of learning	Approximate time allocation per week
Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)	20 minutes focused lesson and at other times as appropriate
Communication, literacy and language (CLL)	5 hours
Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy (PSRN)	4 hours 15 minutes
Knowledge and understanding of the world (KUW)	2 hours
Physical development (PD)	2 hours 15 minutes
Creative development (CD)	2 hours 15 minutes
Modern Languages	35 minutes

The times given are approximate as the EYFS curriculum is often quite integrated.

The hours given do not total a whole week as one afternoon is devoted to skills lessons and other sessions are reserved for story, video, singing and discussion as appropriate.

Pre Prep 2 and 3 (Y1 and Y2) Subject Time Allocation

Subject	Weekly allocation
English inc. Specialist Drama	At least 5 hours
Mathematics	At least 5 hours
Humanities	At least 2 hours 30 minutes
Modern Languages	35 minutes
Music	1 hour 10 minutes
RE	35 minutes
Art	At least 1 hour
DT	Each form receives 1hr per week for a 5 week block
P.E/Games inc. Swimming	At least 35 minutes
ICT skills/Computing	At least 35 minutes

4 Prep Department (Years 3 to 6)

In the Prep School, specialist subject teaching is predominant in Prep 3 and 4 and delivers approximately 50% of the curriculum in Prep 1 and 2.

Subject Time Allocation:

	Prep 1	Prep 2	Prep 3	Prep 4
English	5 hours	5 hours	4 hours	4 hours
Maths	5 hours	5 hours	4 hours	4 hours
Science	1 hour 30mins	1 hour 30mins	2 hours	2 hours
Modern Languages	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour 30mins	1 hour 30mins
History	1 hour 30mins	1 hour 30mins	1 hour 30mins	1 hour
Geography	1 hour 30mins	1 hour 30mins	1 hour 30mins	1 hour 30mins
RE	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour
Music	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour
Art	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour
PE	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour (half termly)
ICT	1 hour (half termly)	1 hour (half termly)	1 hour (half termly)	1 hour (half termly)
DT	1 hour (half termly)	1 hour (half termly)	1 hour (half termly)	1 hour (half termly)
Drama	1 hour 30 mins (half termly)	1 hour 30 mins (half termly)	30 mins	30 mins
Swimming	1 hour 30 mins (half termly)	1 hour 30 mins (half termly)		1 hour (half termly)
Games	2 hours	2 hours	4hours	4 hours
PSHE	30 mins	30 mins	30 mins	30 mins
Reading	30 mins	30 mins	1 hour	1 hour
Total	25 hours	25 hours	25 hours	25 hours

5 Senior School (Years 7 to 13)

5.1 S1 & S2 (Years 7 & 8)

In S1 and S2 all pupils study the same subjects. Subjects covered include English, Mathematics, Science, Modern Languages, Latin, Humanities (Geography, History and RE), Aesthetic and Creative Subjects (Art, DT, Drama and Music), Computer Science, PE and Games.

French is studied in S1 & S2, with German and Spanish introduced in S2 for half a year each. Drama is taken for half a period (one period for half the year) in S1 and S2. English effectively has 4.5 periods in each year.

ICT is studied in S1 and S2 in order to gain familiarity with various programs and skills. Beyond ICT lessons it is taught across the curriculum and monitored by the Head of ICT.

Mathematics and French are set in S1 and S2 and Science is set in S2. English groups are the same as Science groups for timetabling purposes.

Aspects of PSHE are taught via Form Tutors and a specialist team of teachers during form periods.

Subject Time Allocation:

Subject	S1 allocation per week	S2 allocation per week
English Mathematics Science	5 periods	5 periods
French	4 periods	3 periods
German/Spanish	n/a	2 periods
Latin Geography History RE DT Art Music	2 periods	2 periods
IT	2 periods	1 period
PE	1 period	1 period
Games	3 periods	3 periods

5.2 S3 (Year 9)

This is the first year in which pupils can choose some of their subjects [see the 'Option Choice' section for details of the process and guidance given]. All pupils study English, Mathematics, Science (2 periods each of Biology, Chemistry and Physics taught by specialists), Humanities (Geography, History and RE), a Modern Language (French, German or Spanish), PE and Games. This accounts for 32 of the 40 periods.

Pupils can then choose a combination of the following subjects to total 8 periods:

French (4 periods); German (4 periods); Spanish (4 periods); Latin (4 periods); Art (2 periods); Computing (2 periods); DT (2 periods); Music (2 periods); Drama (2 periods).

The S3 timetable is constructed around pupil choices to ensure maximum flexibility to ensure the resultant curriculum is broad and balanced offering a wide range of subjects. For those with an identified need the school will recommend some students to take two periods of extra English to improve literacy skills as part of this options process.

The PSHE curriculum is delivered by a specialist team each week during a specific form period. Careers Education is introduced in S3 in form periods by the Head of Careers. Classical Greek may be available as a lunchtime option.

Subject Time Allocation:

Subject	S3 allocation per week
Mathematics	5 periods
English	4 periods
Biology	2 periods
Chemistry	2 periods
Physics	2 periods
French/German/Spanish *	4 periods
Geography History RE	3 periods
DT * Art * Music * Computing * Latin*	2 periods
PE	1 period
Games	3 periods

** represents an optional subject*

5.3 S4 & S5 (Years 10 & 11)

Pupils follow a significant core GCSE curriculum of English (Language and Literature), Mathematics, Science, a Modern Language (French, German or Spanish) and a Humanities subject (Classical Civilisation, Geography, History or RE). They also have PE and Games lessons.

The strongest mathematicians also study for a FSMQ in Additional Mathematics. The top three Science sets are usually prepared for the three separate sciences, with the lower set taking Trilogy Science. All Science is taught by specialists.

Having a core curriculum of 8 GCSE subjects ensures a broad and balanced curriculum. With the exception of Classical Civilisation and Drama, pupils must have studied a subject to the end of S3 in order to continue with it to GCSE. Pupils have a choice of two further GCSE subjects from the following:

- A second Modern Language (French, German or Spanish)
- A second Humanities subject (Classical Civilisation, Geography, History or RE)
- A third Humanities subject
- Art
- Computing
- DT: Electronic Products or DT: Resistant Materials
- Drama
- Latin
- Music
- Physical Education

Classical Greek GCSE is available as an afterschool option for pupils in S3.S4 and S5.

Subject Time Allocation:

Subject	S4 and S5 allocation per week
Mathematics	5 periods
English	6 periods
Biology	3 periods
Chemistry	3 periods
Physics	3 periods
French/German/Spanish * Latin* Geography History RE DT * Art * Music * Computing *	4 periods
PE	1 period
Games	3 periods

A small number of pupils in S4/S5 would struggle to study 9 GCSE subjects. These pupils study 8 GCSE subjects and receive an extra lesson in English and Maths and two study periods in the school library.

5.4 L6 & U6 (Years 12 & 13)

Most pupils are encouraged to select 3 subjects to study for A level but do have the opportunity to study 4 subjects if that is in their best interest. A Level blocks are constructed from these choices, although pupils can change their choices right up until they begin in the Lower Sixth provided their new choices fit the blocks and the groups are not full. It is expected that pupils entering the Sixth Form will have achieved a minimum of 5 passes (9 to 5) at GCSE, with at least 4 at 6 or higher; a minimum 6 at GCSE is required in each subject studied at A level that has been studied at GCSE. To study Mathematics pupils are required to achieve a grade 7 at GCSE.

Each subject is studied for 8 periods per week with the exception of Further Mathematics which is studied for 12 periods (these periods cover both the Mathematics and Further Mathematics courses). 6th form pupils attend Enrichment lessons (4 periods) and Games (3 periods), with the opportunity of taking Community Action in lieu of Games from Easter of the Lower Sixth year. In subjects with only one pupil in the class the allocation of periods is reduced to 6 periods per week.

Subjects available at A Level:

Art and Design	English Literature	Music Technology
Biology	French	Physical Education
Business Studies	Further Mathematics	Physics
Chemistry	Geography	Product Design
Classical Civilisation	German	Psychology
Computing	Government & Politics	Religious Studies
Design Engineering	History	Spanish
Drama & Theatre Studies	Latin	
Economics	Mathematics	
English Language	Music	

The Level 3 Extended Project Qualification is available to L6 students.

5. Setting

Setting enables us to differentiate our teaching more effectively in certain subjects to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged and supported. After the November assessments in S1 pupils are set in Mathematics and French. After the summer examinations in S1 pupils are placed in science sets from the September of S2. In S3 to S5 pupils remain in sets for science with specialist teachers delivering biology, physics and chemistry as separate subjects to these groups.

In all other subjects, pupils are in mixed ability groups. These lessons are differentiated and the mixed ability classes allow the opportunity to accept, discuss and listen to others' diverse perspectives.

6. Learning Support

Pupils with dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties may have Learning Support lessons organised by the school SENCO. Whilst these may be at lunchtime or before school, there is insufficient time to allocate every pupil receiving Learning Support lessons one of these slots. Therefore, particularly for the younger pupils, they may also be in place of another lesson. This lesson is agreed with pupil, parents and staff and rotates on a termly basis, so as to minimise the disruption to a pupil's learning in any subject.

7. Homework, assessment and reporting

Please see the 'Marking, Assessment and Reporting Policy'.

8. Trips

The School recognises the importance of well-organised visits to inspire and support classroom learning. A full list of the trips planned for the coming academic year may be found on the school's web site.

9 Review and Development

9.1 Procedure

This document, together with the effectiveness of its procedures, is reviewed annually by the Deputy Head's (Academic) SS, and the Policy Committee and as events or legislation change requires.

9.2 Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Trips Policy
- Careers Policy
- Marking, Assessment and Reporting Policy.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Behaviour, Sanctions and Rewards Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Curriculum Documents and Subject specific planning strategies
- SEND Policy
- EAL Policy