
Queen Elizabeth's School

CURRICULUM POLICY

Intent

1. Aims

Queen Elizabeth's School aims to deliver a progressive, innovative approach to education, without losing sight of core values and traditions. This aim is reflected both in the School's academic programme and extra-curricular activities. The School recognises that the acquisition of knowledge must always remain a foundation stone in education, but also places great emphasis on encouraging pupils to develop a life-long love of learning and a free-thinking scholarship. That is to give pupils an appreciation and understanding of the liberal arts, as well as the practical skills of critical thinking, problem solving and methodical research; building not only their knowledge of a subject but their ability to apply that knowledge in order to come up with new insights and new solutions.

The School's ambition is that, by the time they leave, not only will pupils have acquired a thorough mastery of the curriculum material for their subjects, but will also have developed habits of intellectual curiosity, with each pupil having taken advantage of the many opportunities offered beyond the classroom to pursue their own academic interests.

The School's aims require a curriculum that is broad and balanced, offering the academic enabling subjects highly regarded by universities and employers, whilst also ensuring that the arts and technology are featured strongly.

The curriculum aims to set pupils up to be successful in life, not just in their studies. The School's wider mission, to produce young men who are confident, able and responsible, reflects the founding charter which established the School for the 'education, bringing up and instruction of boys'.

Further information on the intent and implementation of the curriculum in each subject area, including the School's Personal Development Time curriculum, can be found in the 'Our Curriculum' brochure available on the School's website.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the Academies Act 2010.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of Governing Bodies set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

The School's curricula also have due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance on Relationships and Sex Education, as well as the Gatsby benchmarks for the provision of Careers Education and support.

The School also follows the Barnet SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) agreed syllabus for Religious Education.

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Implementation

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the Headmaster to account for its implementation.

The Governing Body will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets;
- The School is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a broad and balanced curriculum which includes English, Maths, and Science, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the requirements of the funding agreement;
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN);
- All courses provided for pupils that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and A-levels, are approved by the Secretary of State;
- The School implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements;
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum; and
- The requirements for the provision of Relationships and Sex Education and Careers Education are being met.

3.2 Headmaster

The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the School chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the School;
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate;
- They manage requests to withdraw pupils from aspects of the curriculum, where appropriate;
- The School's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements;
- The Governing Body is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum;
- The Governing Body is advised on School targets and performance in order to make informed decisions; and
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

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3.3 Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy. In particular:

- The Deputy Head (Academic) will support the Headmaster maintain oversight of the curriculum, and will lead work to assess the impact and assist in reporting this information regularly to the Governing Body.
- Heads of Subject will ensure that curricula are regularly reviewed to ensure they are most effectively meeting the aims of the School and respond to any changes in examination syllabuses and assessment methodologies. They will also oversee the implementation process within their departments, working with colleagues to develop curriculum statements, schemes of work and teaching materials.
- The SENCo will work with the Headmaster and colleagues to ensure that the curriculum supports pupils with special educational needs and will advise where adjustments are required to support inclusion.

4. Organisation and planning

4.1 Curriculum sequencing

The structure of the curriculum is based upon the, nationally recognised, different Key Stages. KS3 comprises the Lower School curriculum in each subject (typically taught in Years 7-9), KS4 is GCSEs and the Higher (Level 2) Project Qualification (Years 10 & 11), and KS5 is A-levels and the Extended Project Qualification, for participating candidates (Years 12 & 13). The pastoral curriculum is delivered through Personal Development Time (90 minutes each week in form groups and year group assemblies) which runs throughout the School.

There is a curriculum in each subject area which is constructed so as to allow for progression and the building of skills and knowledge over time. This comprises:

- Ensuring schemes of work focus on understanding and key skills;
- The scaffolding of complex knowledge, introducing it in context;
- Revisiting and revising material regularly; and
- Retrieval practice, for example recall from memory and regular low-stakes testing.

These principles are designed to aid long-term learning, defined as being able to connect new knowledge and information with existing knowledge and information. This will involve synthesis across different subject areas.

4.2 Subject areas

Presently, the following academic subjects are taught at the denoted Key Stages.

At KS3, all pupils study:

- Art
- Biology (separately from Year 9)

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- Chemistry (separately from Year 9)
- English
- French
- Geography
- German
- History
- Latin
- Maths
- Music
- Philosophy, Religion & Society
- Physical Education
- Physics (separately from Year 9)
- Science (combined in Years 7 & 8)
- Technology

At KS4, all pupils continue:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- English (Language and Literature)
- Maths
- Philosophy, Religion & Society (HPQ option)
- Physical Education
- Physics

Pupils then study at least one (but may do both) of:

- French
- German

Similarly, pupils study at least one (but may do both) of:

- Geography
- History

Pupils then select their remaining GCSE courses from:

- Art
- Economics
- Latin
- Music
- Product Design

At KS5, pupils study three or four of:

- Art
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Economics
- English Literature

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- French
- Further Maths
- Geography
- German
- History
- Latin
- Maths
- Music
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Politics
- Product Design
- Sociology

In addition to this many pupils at KS5 complete the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) – an independent research project on a topic of their choice. Both this and the HPQ involve extended writing and viva-style oral presentations.

The School also runs a University Admissions Support Programme (USP) at Key Stage 5, providing guidance and building core skills to aid pupils in their preparations for higher education. USP also purposefully stands for 'unique selling point', understanding that the chances of gaining admission are enhanced by pupils being able to bring greater individuality to their applications. USP is a modular course which examines some of the key skills required for university applications, develops research and communication skills, and provides opportunity for pupils to improve their knowledge in their chosen subject area to take them beyond their A-level syllabuses and access undergraduate material.

4.3 Pastoral curriculum

The pastoral curriculum encompasses topics relevant to meeting requirements with respect of Careers Education, Relationships & Sex Education, Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development and British values, but extends well beyond these provisions. Fuller details of the curriculum in each year group can be found within the School's 'Our Curriculum' brochure, but it also considers important issues such as physical and mental wellbeing, personal finance, diversity and equalities, transition to secondary and transition to adulthood, drugs, and the law. It is also the case that such topics may also be taught within the context of academic subjects where relevant.

The School's approach to Relationships & Sex Education is guided by its own policy, but integrates with the pastoral and subject curricula.

The pastoral curriculum is delivered through:

- Personal Development Time (form tutor led lessons);
- Form discussion slots;
- Assemblies; and
- Bespoke tutorials (one-to-one and small group meetings between pupils and their tutor).

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All of these sessions are scheduled within the timetable. Within form based sessions the School also utilises vertical tutoring, whereby older pupils help deliver material to their younger peers.

Timetabled lessons are supplemented by special events and activities, for example careers fairs and guest lectures which draw upon independent advice, guidance and expertise to support and inspire pupils.

4.4 Planning within departments

Within subject departments there are three phases to curriculum planning:

- Long-term: developing a curriculum statement; deciding and scoping out the order of topics across a year group or Key Stage.
- Medium-term: using schemes of work to set the objectives and assessment requirements of a topic.
- Short-term: determining lesson objectives, sourcing and sharing resources, and preparing tasks and activities which will build knowledge and skills in the pupils.

Departments are required to think about how the curriculum in the Lower School will build strong foundations for extension as pupils progress through the School.

Planning in all phases is led by the Head of Subject, but involves all members of a department. Resources and planning materials are made available within departments via the shared drive to help ensure consistency in implementation.

This process is aided by staff INSET activities and the School's purchasing of books and resource subscriptions to support both subject knowledge and pedagogic knowledge development.

5. Inclusion

The School sets high expectations for all pupils. Staff will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious personalised targets for each pupil in each subject and plan challenging work accordingly. All pupils at Queen Elizabeth's are very able, but close attention will be given to ensure that the following groups are appropriately supported and stretched:

- The most able pupils within a cohort;
- Pupils with lower prior attainment;
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, for example those qualifying for pupil premium;
- Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities; and
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL).

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Staff will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to achieving. Staff will draw upon the strategies outlined in a pupil's Inclusion Report or Education, Health and Care Plan and will make reasonable adaptations and adjustments. Further information can be found in the School's SEND Policy and annual information report, Equal Opportunities Policy, and Accessibility Plan.

Given that well over 40% of pupils are advanced bilingual learners, there is significant focus on the development of literacy skills, with increased timetabled lesson time and further opportunities for support for pupils in need of greater assistance.

Across all academic departments, subject clinics are run by staff and supported by older pupils to both provide extra support to a pupil who may be struggling with a topic and to help stretch those seeking extension.

Impact

6. Monitoring arrangements

The Governing Body will receive a report relating to teaching and learning each term, as well as key outcomes data and the School's curriculum brochure at least annually.

6.1 Critical friend reviews

The Governing Body commissions independent external reviews of each subject department conducted by Independent Schools Inspectorate consultants, acting in the role of critical friends. These take place at least once every four years for each subject area and include an assessment of the curriculum, its planning and implementation. The Head of Subject and the department's senior manager play an active role alongside the independent expert. The departmental review results in a full report, including a grading, covering areas of strength and areas for improvement or further development. The outcomes and key findings are reported to the full Governing Body.

Internal interim reviews are conducted annually by the Head of Subject.

6.2 Senior staff reviews of learning

Each year the Senior Leadership Team conduct three senior staff reviews of learning, one in each Key Stage. The review explores the curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, pupil progress (including SEND and pupil premium cohorts), the support for SEND and pupil premium students, and enrichment opportunities available across all subject areas. The methods include file checks, data analysis, learning walks and conversations with pupils.

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6.3 Department development planning

Within departments, Heads of Subject lead – with the support of senior managers – processes for reviewing the effectiveness of teaching and learning and pupil progress. This draws upon analysis of internal and external assessment and considers the impact of curriculum changes and whether revised schemes of work or topic options would better support the School's aims. Heads of Subject also conduct lesson observations, learning walks and pupil work checks within their department.

6.4 Results and destinations

External examination results at GCSE, AS and A-level, including the numbers gaining top grades in a wide variety of subjects are used to monitor the success of a particular department's curriculum and to assess whether the School is delivering excellence across a broad range of areas. Comparative analysis is conducted, so far as it is statistically significant, between cohorts, other high performing institutions and against predicted outcomes.

The destinations of leavers and the higher education course they are progressing to is also useful in understanding the pupils' interests and strengths at the end of their time at the School.

*LINKED
POLICIES*

- Assessment for Learning*
- Enrichment*
- Equal Opportunities*
- Governors' Statement of Education*
- Homework*
- Relationships & Sex Education*
- School's Mission Statement*
- SEND*
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development*

Approved by the Governing Body on 27 February 2020

Signed

B.R. Martin, Chairman of the Governing Body