



Brentwood School

SENIOR SCHOOL CURRICULUM POLICY

Introduction

The curriculum is all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and personal development. It includes not only the formal requirements of the academic curriculum, but also a diverse array of activities which constitute an important aspect of our extensive co-curricular programme. These activities complement teaching and learning within the formal curriculum and they serve to promote the cultural, physical, social, intellectual and spiritual growth of our pupils. We also refer to the 'hidden curriculum', or what the pupils learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We aim to teach children how to grow into healthy, positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with each other while developing knowledge, understanding and skills, so that they achieve their true potential.

Values

Our ethos is reflected in our School Motto: 'Virtue, learning and manners' which was created for the School in 1622 by John Donne. Our primary objective at Brentwood School is to provide all pupils with a broad and balanced education that will enable them to assume their places successfully in the technologically driven global village of the twenty-first century. Our distinctive curriculum is designed to promote an intrinsic love of learning and to lead young people to develop an understanding of concepts such as internationalism, humanitarianism, and environmentalism; concepts that transcend discrete subject areas or academic disciplines. This holistic philosophy, with a clear emphasis on exploring the interconnectivity between subjects, underpins the design and the delivery of the curriculum at Brentwood School and is reflected in both our status as an IB World School and in our pioneering Key Stage Four *Human Universe* course. We actively promote British values.

Aims and Objectives

We are an IB World School and the aims and objectives of our School curriculum are succinctly articulated in the attributes and values espoused by the *IB Learner Profile*. We strive for our pupils to be:

Inquirers: We nurture curiosity, and develop skills for inquiry and research. We help pupils to develop the skills necessary to learn independently and with others. We inspire pupils to sustain their love of learning throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable: We promote the use of conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We encourage pupils to engage with ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers: We focus on developing critical and creative thinking skills in order to enable our pupils to analyse complex problems and to develop responses which demonstrate an ability to think laterally.

Communicators: The communication skills of all pupils are nurtured at every level throughout the School. Pupils are afforded many opportunities to work collaboratively and they are encouraged to listen carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

Principled: Pupils are expected to act with integrity and honesty, and we expect them to demonstrate a strong sense of justice and respect for the dignity and rights of all people. They are taught to take responsibility for their actions and consequences.

Open-minded: By critically appreciating their own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others, pupils become increasingly receptive to new ideas and experiences.

Caring: Pupils are expected to show empathy, compassion and respect.

Risk-takers: Pupils are taught to approach uncertainty with forethought and determination and to work independently and co-operatively in order to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. They develop resourcefulness and resilience in the face of challenges and change.

Balanced: Pupils are taught to understand the importance of balancing different aspects of their lives – intellectual, physical, and emotional – to achieve well-being for themselves and others. They are encouraged to recognize their interdependence with other people and the world in which we all live.

Reflective: We encourage pupils to consider the world and their own ideas and experiences. We work to help them understand their own strengths and weaknesses in order to support their learning and personal development.

We believe that each individual pupil learns best in different ways. We provide a rich, varied, and appropriately differentiated curriculum that allows all children the opportunity to fulfil their potential and to become the very best versions of themselves creatively and academically. Throughout the curriculum we promote the fundamentally British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Curriculum Review Protocol & Procedures

The Headmaster is responsible for the overall planning and organisation of the curriculum which is supervised and reviewed by the Deputy Head (Academic). The curriculum is reviewed on an annual basis by senior staff, members of the Academic Committee and the Governors' Education Committee. The curriculum is constantly developing and this evolutionary process is driven by the changing needs of our School community, the desire to carefully evaluate and ultimately embrace certain pedagogic innovations, and our responsibility to respond fully and creatively to statutory government policy and non-statutory guidelines. Discussions about curriculum

developments/enhancements occur throughout the academic year. Potential changes to the curriculum must be brought to the attention of the Headmaster and Deputy Head (Academic) and they are then placed before the Academic Committee and Forum for active consideration. Finally, proposals are submitted to the Governors' Education Committee. This process should normally be completed by the end of the Michaelmas Term for possible implementation at the beginning of the following academic year.

Pupils are given opportunities to choose subjects at various stages during their school careers and these are indicated in the details below.

The Role of the Head of Department

A Head of Department is responsible to the Headmaster, through the Deputy Head (Academic) for the effective delivery of the curriculum. He/she is expected to follow the guidance in the teaching and learning policy in order to:

- Ensure that a relevant scheme of work is maintained and reviewed regularly and that subject policy is implemented. Copies of up to date schemes and policies should be given to the Deputy Head (Academic), and displayed on the computer S:Drive.
- Lead the teachers of the subject, offering help and guidance where necessary.
- Hold formal subject meetings, submitting minutes to the Deputy Head (Academic) at least once a fortnight.
- Manage the subject budget effectively and ensure that the subject is appropriately resourced.
- Design, implement and evaluate annual subject development plans.
- Keep abreast of the subject and strategies for teaching it, ensuring that relevant information is disseminated to the subject staff.
- Ensure that there is an appropriate subject assessment policy and that subject staff implement regular and effective assessments including, where necessary, formal examinations.
- Monitor standards of teaching and learning in accordance with our assessment policy.
- Publish the above information in a subject handbook and ensure that all copies of this handbook are regularly updated, both in hard copies and on the S:Drive.
- Attend Academic Committee and Leadership meetings.
- While responsibility for these areas lies with the Head of Department, it should be recognised that good practice requires consultation and collaboration with subject staff about all matters that influence their work.

An Outline of the Academic Curriculum

The Development of Key Skills

Our curriculum is designed to be progressive and it is appropriately calibrated to complement increasing levels of cognitive development between the ages of 11 and 18. We hold uncompromisingly high expectations for all our pupils and we believe that the quality of learning, stimulated by great teaching, is of more import than innate natural ability. The curriculum becomes more sophisticated as a pupil progresses through the School, in terms of the expectations that it places upon a pupil's skills, knowledge and understanding. Consideration of concepts that transcend discrete subject areas encourages pupils to explore the interconnectivity of different disciplines and examine the very foundations of knowledge itself.

Pupils develop *linguistically* by focusing upon communication skills to improve their use of language when listening, speaking, reading and writing. Lessons in English, modern and classical languages all promote language acquisition, though many other subjects complement and enhance the development of such skills.

Mathematical skills are primarily provided through the study of mathematics. However, science and technology lessons also provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding through a variety of practical and research based activities. The practical application of abstract concepts to novel scenarios provides an excellent opportunity for the development of core mathematical skills.

Scientific skills focus on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials and forces. The sciences develop associated skills of investigation through observing, hypothesising and then conducting experiments and recording results.

The development of *aesthetic, creative and technological skills* is also important. We include in this the development, planning and communication associated with Computing, the tools and machinery, equipment and materials used in Graphic Products and Product Design as well as Food Technology, Art and Music.

Children with Special Educational Needs

The curriculum within our School is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend. Those pupils identified with special learning needs - specific learning difficulties (SEN), English as an additional language (EAL) or who are especially Able/Talented - are supported primarily through differentiation. This may mean they are supported in the classroom by Learning Support teachers or withdrawn in small groups, as well as by teachers differentiating resources or activities. Pupils on our Learning Support Register have individual education plans (**One Plans**) which identify areas and targets upon which to focus, and meetings are held to discuss these needs with parents. Please refer to the Special Educational Needs and Academic Enrichment (Able/Talented) Policies for particular details.

Special education provision means provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for pupils of any given age as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum and teaching and learning strategies.

The Brentwood School admissions procedure records any identified need or disability of the pupil upon entry and parents are strongly encouraged to liaise with the Learning Development Department prior to their child's entry to the School, concerning any special need. The School is committed to early identification, assessment and assistance of learning difficulties; all staff are involved in this process and will refer, upon consultation with the Tutor and Head of Year, to the Learning Development Department. Subject teachers are then responsible for differentiation, support and the progress of pupils with specific learning difficulties or special needs within their classes. The Learning Development Department is available for advice, materials and 'in class' support. The Learning Development Department reflects the whole school policy towards the development of the individual pupil's learning skills.

All pupils have the right to be able to access and benefit fully from a curriculum which is appropriate to their age and specific aptitudes. This provides pupils with the best opportunity of learning and making progress academically. The multifarious individual needs of pupils cover a broad spectrum; disabilities and specific learning difficulties exist across the whole ability range. Brentwood School has a well-established Learning

Development Department in which the level of support offered by the department reflects the diverse needs of the pupils on its register; including a very few who may have a Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan setting out their special needs.

The Learning Development Department organises and conducts exam sessions designed to enable pupils with special needs to be given every consideration necessary in order for them to deliver an optimum performance; this may include the provision of extra time. In some cases this will involve a reader, amanuensis, or the use of a laptop.

The Learning Development Register of all pupils with special needs is on the S:Drive/Learning Development Folder.

Many pupils have already had their specific learning difficulties or special needs detected at primary school and such pupils are placed directly on the register and an individual education plan (One Plan) is written and distributed. However, there will always be pupils whose specific problems become more identifiable at a slightly later stage.

If a subject teacher observes that a pupil is having difficulties above and beyond what would normally be anticipated, then the Form Tutor is informed and a record is kept of all additional strategies utilised by the subject teacher. If the subject teacher believes that, despite assistance, the pupil is still experiencing difficulties and not making sufficient progress, then he or she should e-mail the Head of Learning Development with details of the concern.

Form Tutors, who liaise with subject teachers to monitor the pupil's target and provision, are central to the implementation and monitoring of the individual educational plan. They are responsible for ensuring that each pupil is fully supported in all aspects of his/her School life. The Form Tutor reports half termly to the Learning Development Department upon the progress of each pupil with a One Plan.

The Learning Development Department is represented at all parents' evenings and consultation days. Parents receive copies of One Plans and information about support sessions. The department encourages parents to make appointments to discuss any academic or pastoral concerns.

The School is committed to improving access for pupils with special needs and strives to make reasonable adjustment. The School is accessible to wheelchair users. The SENDA Plan is available on the School website. Where a pupil is in possession of a Statement or EHCP, the School will respond to its provisions and recommendations in order to provide an education which fulfils its requirements.

Please note that further details about curriculum matters are referred to in the Special Educational Needs Policy which makes specific reference to the Learning Development Department and English as an Additional Language Department, both of which are responsible for communicating pupils' individual needs to all academic staff.

English as an Additional Language

Pupils who have English as an Additional Language are provided with language classes and examinations under the direction of the Head of EAL and the EAL Department.

The identification and assessment of the special educational needs of pupils whose first language is not English requires particular care. Where there is uncertainty about an

individual, all aspects of the pupil's performance in different subjects will be looked at to establish whether the problems are due to limitations in his/her command of the language or arise from other identifiable special educational needs.

The pupils on the EAL register are mostly boarders, although there are a few day pupils.

The entry procedure for non-native speakers who are applying to the School is to take the EAL Entry Test. If a pupil is offered a place to study, then he or she will also sit an EAL Placement Test upon arrival. This allows the EAL teaching staff to gain an up-to-date analysis of his/her language ability and also provides an important first point of contact between the staff and pupil.

Lessons are allocated to each year group and pupils are either taught in small groups or individually, depending upon both need and availability. Further support sessions are offered by staff during lunch times and after school. Parents may occasionally request private tutorials from a specialist, over and above the School's normal provision, and for this, a charge is made.

Excellent communication with pupils, teachers and parents is maintained in several ways. Individual education plans (One Plans) are written for each EAL pupil during the academic year and these outline his/her current level of linguistic ability as well as strategies for both pupils and subject teachers to employ in order to improve overall language development and academic performance. Subject teachers routinely refer to One Plans for all EAL pupils whom they teach. The One Plans are also sent to parents and guardians, so they are made aware of this information. In addition, teaching staff are informed about pupils at staff meetings, via emails and in preparation for Parents' Evenings.

The EAL Department also liaises closely with the Exams Office, particularly with regard to establishing which EAL pupils are entitled to extra time in public examinations and entitled to use bilingual dictionaries.

The exam courses followed by EAL pupils are the IGCSE in English as a Second Language in the 4th/5th Years and IELTS (International English Language Testing System), FCE (First Certificate Examination) and CAE (Cambridge Advanced English) in the Sixth Form.

Able/Talented Pupils

The School has extensive provision for Able/Talented pupils which is articulated within a separate policy statement and this explains identification strategies, monitoring processes, learning resources, and subject-specific strategies for developing higher order learning skills. It also details relevant provision for different year groups within the School. We believe that academic enrichment is a core objective of our inclusive learning community, and consequently, all educational opportunities are potentially open to each and every pupil who expresses an interest.

Whilst the School does maintain an up-to-date register of such pupils, we believe that the list is, in itself, no replacement for an individualised approach to supporting, nurturing and encouraging each child to develop his/her talents and realise his/her full potential. Small tutor groups and a strong year group structure enable us to identify those with particular strengths and talents.

Careers

The Careers Programme is centred on helping students find information on different careers so they can make informed decisions at the crucial points in their education. Sessions are run from the 3rd Year to help students explore options, to understand what choices they have to make and to prepare compelling applications. From the 3rd Year, pupils also have access to the FAST TOMATO online platform to help them begin exploring career options. In the 5th Year, pupils take the MORRISBY PROFILE tests in order to identify their key skills and to prompt them to explore career paths beyond the obvious. All 5th Year pupils are also offered an interview with an independent careers adviser and this feeds into their 1-to-1 interviews with senior staff to help them to make informed choices either within our Sixth Form or at an alternative provider. 5th Year pupils also undertake work experience following their public examinations enabling them to reflect further upon potential careers. In the Sixth Form, students have access to UNIFROG, an online platform that helps them to identify university courses, apprenticeships and school leavers' programmes. This is supported by further training on areas such as interviews, finance, gap years and applications to universities overseas. The Sixth Form Team also provide guidance and support for students completing their UCAS application forms.

Additionally, we provide a number of Career Lunch sessions throughout the year where visiting speakers are able to talk to small groups of pupils who are interested in their field. We also arrange a Careers Convention each year with over 80 stalls representing a wide range of career areas and universities. This is open to all 4th Year pupils and above, as well as any prospective pupils who have applied to our Sixth Form. All advice is presented in an impartial manner and guidance and support is offered to all pupils to enable them to make informed choices and fulfil their potential.

PSHE

PSHE is known at Brentwood School as 'Life Skills' and this is delivered in discrete calendared sessions by a combination of teaching staff and external PSHE specialists. This aims to provide adequate preparation to enable young people to avail of the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life whilst at School and to prepare them for their adult life beyond. The PSHE promotes the basic British values of democracy and the rule of law. It encourages respect and tolerance for other people and celebrates diversity within our own community and the world beyond. We celebrate difference and promote equality, regardless of disability, race, gender, religion or age. Similarly, we address topics such as sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religious beliefs and pregnancy/maternity.

The full details of the Life Skills programme can be found in the *Life Skills Handbook* on the School website.

The broad areas covered by the programme include:

- Learning skills
- Citizenship
- Health education, including drugs and sex / relationships
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural dimensions
- Financial Literacy

The School also offers parents the opportunity to attend evening meetings to keep them informed about their child's Life Skills programme and to enable them to gather more information directly from experts in the various areas.

Academic Subjects

Each subject provides details of how the curriculum is organised and delivered through schemes of work which are included in departmental handbooks.

The following represents the curriculum in operation in the Senior School from 2016-2017. Please note that a programme of Life Skills and Careers Education is subsumed within our curriculum provision.

1st and 2nd Years:

Throughout the 1st and 2nd Years, the curriculum is very broad, balanced and challenging, thus providing all pupils with the opportunity to develop their aptitudes and abilities to the full. Subject options are, therefore, kept to a minimum.

All pupils take:

Art, Drama, Dance, English, *Food Technology (**2nd Year only*), French, Geography, History, Computing, Latin, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education, Science, *Technology (**1st Year only*).

Additionally, all 1st Year pupils study French, German and Spanish. This early exposure and parity of provision ensures that they are able to make informed choices in terms of which languages to pursue in the 2nd and 3rd Years as well as at GCSE. In the 2nd Year, pupils can elect to study Greek, Global Perspectives, and/or Language Development in place of one or two of the Modern Foreign Languages that they commenced at the start of the 1st Year.

3rd Year:

This year provides a preparation for GCSEs, particularly in science where pupils embark upon the IGCSE Science and Maths courses. In addition, pupils start to focus upon their areas of interest and choose subjects from Art, Drama, Computing, Food Technology, Latin, Music and Technology whilst continuing with the core curriculum. This includes: English, Geography, History, Mathematics, PE and Games, Religious Education and Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics).

4th and 5th Years:

Options for GCSE/IGCSE are decided during the 3rd Year, and the curriculum in the 4th and 5th Years is dedicated to success at GCSE/IGCSE. All pupils continue to study: English, Mathematics, Physical Education, Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics). The majority of pupils take at least nine subjects at GCSE/IGCSE including at least one Modern Foreign Language and at least one Humanity, whilst English includes both Language and Literature and counts as two IGCSEs. 4th Year pupils benefit from an interdisciplinary epistemological course entitled 'The Human Universe'. This course examines the formation of knowledge in different subject areas and provides an opportunity for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding beyond the confines of the curriculum. Taught through a variety of seminars, workshops and lectures, the programme introduces pupils to a more 'university' style approach to teaching and learning. As part of this innovative programme, pupils complete an independent research project on a subject of their choosing. This element of the course is assessed externally and constitutes a Level 2 OCR Higher Project Qualification (HPQ).

Our flexible option scheme allows pupils to choose four subjects from the following list:

Art, Computing, Design Technology, Drama, Food Technology, French, Geography, German, Greek, History, Latin, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education, Spanish
Pupils may elect to take Classical Civilisation as an additional subject taught off timetable.

The Sixth Form:

Brentwood School offers two alternative curricular routes for its Sixth Form students. They can either study A Levels or enrol upon the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). Both A Levels and the IBDP provide academically rigorous and stimulating programmes of study from which pupils can develop their skills and knowledge to progress to the very best universities to study the most competitive and challenging courses. Guidance is offered to pupils and their parents to determine which of these alternatives best meets each pupil's individual needs.

A Levels at Brentwood

The vast majority of pupils study three A Level subjects with the exception of Further Mathematicians and a small number of linguists. Additionally, pupils are strongly encouraged to complete an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Whilst A Levels provide specialised courses of study, the majority of pupils will also take part in academic enrichment activities along with Games and Life Skills. This includes Extended Essays, MOOCs, academic societies, subject extension sessions and a termly programme of talks.

The subjects currently available are:

Art, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Computer Studies, Economics, English, French, Further Mathematics, Geography, Design Technology, German, Greek, History, Latin, Mathematics, Music, Philosophy & Ethics, Photography, Physical Education, Physics, Politics, Psychology, Spanish and Theatre Studies.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Brentwood

Brentwood School offers the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP). The IBDP, uniquely, has a coherent vision which fosters internationalism, academic rigour (both breadth and depth), social responsibility, independent, flexible thinking and personal development.

Brentwood School's programme offers an unusually wide range of subjects, namely:

Biology, Business Management, Chemistry, Chinese A Literature, Chinese B, Classical Greek, Classical Greek and Roman Studies, Computer Science, Dance, Design Technology, Economics, English A Literature, English B, Environmental Systems and Societies, Film, Food Technology, French A Literature, French B, Geography, German A Literature, German ab initio, German B, Global Politics, History, Italian A Literature, Italian ab initio, Latin, Mandarin ab initio, Mathematics, Mathematical Studies, Music, Philosophy, Psychology, Physics, School-supported Self-taught Language A Literature, Spanish B, Sport Exercise and Health Science, Theatre, Visual Arts, World Religions; plus Theory of Knowledge, and the Extended Essay

For full details, please consult our *Sixth Form Academic Prospectus*, which can be viewed and downloaded from our website.