



2a CURRICULUM POLICY

This policy applies to all School departments, including EYFS

1. Introduction

1.1 The curriculum at Amherst School covers everything that is learnt in classroom situations (the Formal Curriculum), in 'extra'-curricular activities (i.e. team games, trips and clubs) and is absorbed by being at the School and learning from the examples given by all who work and learn here. The curriculum is the means by which the School sets out to achieve its aims.

1.2 The curriculum should reflect the activities of a whole human being and should encourage us to be tolerant, wise and courageous. These activities include experience in areas including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. As we are a religious foundation, central in our curriculum is a development of spiritual and moral awareness. None of the teaching at this School should be without knowledge by pupils and staff of the spiritual and moral dimensions of what is being taught and learnt. All subject areas contribute to 'Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural' (SMSC) and their specific contributions must be kept up to date within the SMSC mapping document.

2. Values

2.1 Our School curriculum is underpinned by the values and ethos that we hold dear at our School. The curriculum is the means by which the School achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.

2.2 Our School is in full agreement with the values of our founder Antonio Rosmini:

- a. We value the way in which all children are unique, and our curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures. We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
- b. We value the importance of each person in our community. We organise our curriculum so that we promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our community.
- c. We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each child in our School for who they are, and we treat them with fairness and honesty. We aim to enable each person to be successful, and we provide equal opportunities for all the children in our School.
- d. We value our environment, and we aim, through our curriculum, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.

3. Characteristics of the Curriculum

3.1 The curriculum displays the following characteristics:

- a. It is student / pupil centred.
- b. It covers personal, social, health and economic education along with the key areas of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human & social, physical and aesthetic & creative experiences. It complies with the National Curriculum requirements in as much as individual subjects feel this is suitable.

- c. Pupils acquire and develop core skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy.
- d. It takes into account:
 - Learning
 - Metacognition
 - Knowledge
 - Concepts
 - Skills
 - Thinking
 - Attitudes
- e. It is broad and introduces pupils to a wide range of experiences, knowledge and skills.
- f. It is balanced with a fair allocation of time for each subject area.
- g. It is relevant; designed to prepare pupils for the world of work and leisure.
- h. It allows for all pupils to fulfil their potential by enabling them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options. Accurate and up-to-date careers guidance will be made available to all pupils in an impartial manner.
- i. It promotes equal opportunities and a positive attitude to diversity.
- j. It allows for differentiation in the way it is delivered to match pupil's needs, abilities and aptitudes.
- k. It is augmented and enhanced by many experiences outside the "formal curriculum" organised on a whole School, house, year, form, group or individual basis.
- l. It is available to all pupils regardless of disability, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

4. Curriculum Aims

4.1 The specific aims of the curriculum are to help pupils to:

- a. Discover their potential.
- b. Acquire understanding, knowledge and transferable skills – instrumental and social – that will help them in their School life, adult life, employment, leisure and citizenship in a rapidly changing world, including economic awareness and the ability to judge when to be flexible and adaptable or to stand firm.
- c. Use number, language (speaking and listening) and ICT effectively.
- d. Appreciate achievements and aspirations in all subject areas and to experience pleasure and personal achievement in these areas.
- e. Develop respect for other people regardless of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- f. Develop personal skills and values including a respect for the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

THE PREPARATORY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

5. Organisation and planning

5.1 The curriculum is planned as a department to ensure progression, coverage and enjoyment. We agree a long-term plan for the Preparatory School. This indicates what topics are to be taught in each term. We review our long-term plans on an annual basis and work to a two-year cycle to allow for mixed age groups.

5.2 We have created our own curriculum skills and knowledge lists that use much of the 2014 National Curriculum but are not limited by it. This has been developed with Senior School colleagues to ensure progression through the school. We refer to these as Route Maps and these have been shared with parents. We use schemes of work where we feel these are appropriate such as in Maths which is guided by the Abacus scheme of work. Whilst the school provides access to resources such as PlanBee for foundation subjects, we look for ways to deliver subjects in a bespoke manner wherever possible.

5.3 Our short-term plans are those that our teachers write on a weekly or daily basis. We use these to set out the learning objectives for each session (which are presented as questions), and to identify what resources, support, challenge and activities we are going to use in the lesson.

5.4 In the Early Years and Foundation Stage we follow the statutory guidance for EYFS (See EYFS policy for greater detail). We plan the curriculum carefully, so that there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum and early learning goals, and there is planned progression in all curriculum areas.

5.5 Our curriculum is designed to be as creative as possible helping the children to make links and connections between information. However, these links are not forced and, where subjects need to stand alone, such as maths we do so. The school's creative curriculum nearly always includes English, History, Geography and Creative Arts.

6. Children with specific learning needs

6.1 The curriculum in our School is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the School. If we think it necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children, then we do so only after the parents of the child have been consulted.

6.2 If a child has a specific learning need, our School does all it can to meet these individual needs. If a child displays signs of having a specific learning need, his/her teacher makes an assessment of this need. In most instances the teacher is able to provide resources and educational opportunities which meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation. If a child's need is more severe, we if necessary, use the support provided by Learning Support Assistants, and we involve the appropriate external agencies.

6.3 The School provides a 'Pupil Passport' (Individual Educational Plan) for each of the children who are on the SEND register. This sets out the nature of the specific learning need, and outlines how the School will aim to address the need. It also sets out targets for improvement, so that we can review and monitor the progress of each child at regular intervals.

7. The Foundation Stage

7.1 The curriculum that we teach in the reception class meets the requirements set out in the National Curriculum at Foundation Stage. Our curriculum planning focuses on the Early Learning Goals and on developing children's skills and experiences, as set out in this document.

7.2 Our School fully supports the principle that young children learn through play, and by engaging in well-planned structured activities. Teaching in the reception class builds on the experiences of the children in their pre-School learning.

7.3 Within the first few weeks, the class teacher completes a baseline assessment. Then, during the children's first term in the reception class, their teacher begins to record the skills of each child through focused observations which are recorded on Tapestry. This assessment forms an important part of the future curriculum planning for each child. The Foundation Stage Profile is used to assess children's progress during the year.

7.4 We are well aware that all children need the support of parents and teachers to make good progress in School. We strive to build positive links with the parents of each child by keeping them informed about the way in which the children are being taught and how well each child is progressing and, as well as regular Parent / Teacher Meetings, the Tapestry App provides parents with information.

8. The role of the subject leader

8.1 The role of the subject leader is to:

- a. provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject;
- b. support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to the subject;
- c. monitor pupil progress in that subject area;
- d. provide efficient resource management for the subject.

8.2 In the Preparatory School, all teachers take responsibility for at least one area of the curriculum. The Preparatory School aims to give all teachers a minimum of 5 hours non-contact time each week, and the expectation is that some of this time will be used to carry out the necessary duties involved with their subject leader role. It is the role of each subject leader to keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level. They review the way the subject is taught in the Preparatory School, liaise with their Senior counterparts and plan for improvement. This development planning links to whole-School objectives. Each subject leader reviews the curriculum plans for their subject, ensures that there is coverage of the School's Curriculum and that progression is planned into schemes of work.

9. Monitoring and review

9.1 The Head of Preparatory is responsible for the day to day organisation of the curriculum. The Head of Preparatory and other staff monitor the planning for all teachers, ensuring that all classes are taught the requirements of the School's Curriculum.

9.2 Curriculum co-ordinators will monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the School. They will examine long-term and medium-term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. Curriculum co-ordinators also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

THE SENIOR SCHOOL CURRICULUM

10. Managing the Senior School Curriculum

10.1 The Senior Leadership Team along with the Heads of Department (Middle Leaders) as a body, concern themselves with the day to day maintenance and development of the curriculum, that is:

- a. Financing the curriculum (in conjunction with finance staff).
- b. Classroom observation with the view to developing teaching skills throughout the School and promoting SEND best practice* (with all its financial implications).
- c. Carrying out Staff Appraisal.

- d. Maintenance of departmental schemes of works and their implementation.
- e. Mutual organisation of course work / controlled assessments for examination purposes for the benefit of pupils.
- f. Continuing discussion on timetable matters.
- g. Discussion of options for Year 10 and Year 12 to maintain choice and opportunity.
- h. Maintaining links throughout the different sections of the School (i.e. Preparatory/Senior, EYFS/Preparatory).
- i. Holding training sessions or seminars to strengthen or develop any of the above areas. *see section on Learning Support

10.2 It is important that the business of the Middle Leaders is disseminated throughout the staff through:

- a. Publication of the minutes of their meetings.
- b. Regular departmental meetings where all relevant matters are discussed with the department (so that information is passed on and feedback can be passed back). Minutes for these meetings should also be made and copies passed to the relevant line manager.

The Headteacher and SLT are responsible for the process described above functioning effectively. To this end the Headteacher will hold regular meetings with the Deputy Head Academic. There will be departmental review meetings during the course of the academic year. Departmental reviews will involve the Head of Department and relevant line manager. Discussions at these meetings will focus on examination performance, department development and any other departmental issues arising over the year.

10.3 Option choices for Post 16 study are initially built around the perceived intentions of the students who will be making these choices. Choices at GCSE are more limited. All pupils will continue with a core of subjects: English Literature, English Language, Science, Mathematics, RE, PE and PSHCCE. They will also have a choice of additional subjects leading to the promotion of a balanced curriculum.

- a. We offer a broad range of arts, languages and humanities subjects in years 7 - 9 and thereafter in Years 10 & 11 aim to ensure that where appropriate, pupils, as well as the core subjects already mentioned, have the opportunity to continue with at least
 - one foreign language
 - one humanity
 - one creative subject
- b. The sixth form supporting curriculum that we offer should ensure that all students have the opportunity to continue to develop their life skills alongside their subject specific studies.

11. Timetable

11.1 The timetable is the practical means whereby we try to embody the School's philosophy. Subject allocations aim to be fair and we will take into account recommendations and examination boards' guidelines, but where there is conflict with our wish to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum, fine judgements have to be made through discussions with Heads of Department, SLT, and Timetable staff.

11.2 As a priority we endeavour to provide the best possible timetable for the pupils although consideration will be given to staff expectations where possible.

12. Student Groupings

12.1 Mostly at Amherst School pupils are in mixed ability groups. However, strong arguments have been advanced by some subjects for some form of setting or streaming. We feel this is a question for departments to decide but where possible urge that nothing in the setting or streaming arrangements should make pupils unable to move to an upper set or stream (i.e. by teaching lower groups a different syllabus).

13. Assessment

13.1 The first level of assessment we have is nationally standardised tests – NFER, CEM, GCSE, Morrisby Tests and A2. Results of all of these are available to all staff and should be used to:-

- a. Locate particular problems for individuals and provide indicators that progress is being made.
- b. Provide information for departments about trends amongst years and progress being made against earlier predictions.
- c. Monitor whole group trends and advise future actions.
- d. Provide target grades for pupils in examination subjects. This will appear on reports to parents alongside the current grade the pupil is working at in key stage 4 and 5.

13.2 The second level is classroom tests and end of session examinations.

13.3 Departments should keep year on year records of results for individual pupils and whole years and examples of internal examination scripts should be kept for evidential purposes and to help ensure consistency. Internal examination scripts for every pupil should be kept for at least a period of 1 year following completion of a course. Samples of examination scripts should be kept throughout the shelf life of the examination course. A serious attempt must be made to locate pupils' progress against national curriculum expectations where appropriate.

13.4 Marking throughout the School should be positive in that the pupil is given some indication of:

- a. what has been achieved – 'What Worked Well' (WWW);
- b. how this work can be improved – 'Even Better If' (EBI) and/or;
- c. how to improve in the future;

A mark or grade is never enough.

13.5 Internal examinations should constantly be reviewed as there is a clear connection between how a subject is taught and how it is examined. If the examination regime is too restricted, then so will the teaching.

14. LEARNING SUPPORT and MORE ABLE PUPILS

14.1 The role of the Academic Support Department is primarily to deal with pupils requiring extra input into their learning and is dealt with in the SEND and the More Able Pupils Policy.

14.2 The expertise of our Academic Support Department is useful in the development of teaching skills within the whole School.

14.3 The ability to teach and support pupils with specific learning needs should be part of the repertory of all staff, with support and training as appropriate from the Academic Support Department. All teaching and learning should be appropriate for the age and aptitude of pupils within the class.

15. TRAINING STAFF

15.1 The central mechanism for this is the Appraisal Review Meeting. However, we encourage staff to attend courses and share that experience with their own departments and with the whole School if that is appropriate.

15.2 Another extremely good way of developing as a teacher, is to become a GCSE, A Level or other course examiner.

15.3 In addition, the School will from time to time provide whole School in-service training or more focused training for particular groups (e.g. Heads of Department).

16. Extra-Curricular Activities

16.1 There are several activities that take place outside the confines of the timetable but which we regard as of equal educational importance to anything inside the timetable. These activities have tended to include, amongst others:

- Competitive games – sports meetings
- Duke of Edinburgh Programme
- Work Experience
- Community Service
- Young Enterprise
- Debating Competitions
- Dramatic performances and music concerts and events

17. Key Skills

17.1 We regard these areas as important throughout the School but becoming more focused from Year 10 upwards. Staff should take every opportunity to strengthen pupils grasp in areas of communication, numeracy and ICT, as well as the key skills of problem solving, working with others and improving own learning and performance.

This policy was approved by SLT:

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Point of contact (Reviewer): RJW