

POLICY



LOUGHBOROUGH
Amherst School

CURRICULUM POLICY

This policy applies to all School departments, including EYFS.

This policy was approved by Governors:

Date: November 2024

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Point of contact (Reviewer): X. Lin

1. Introduction

1.1 The curriculum at Loughborough Amherst School is the total learning experience provided to our pupils within and beyond the classroom. Our curriculum is broad, balanced and allows for a range of options and specialism in Key Stages 4 and 5, nurturing the aspirations of our pupils so that they may 'flourish and achieve their greatest potential' as stated in our Mission Statement.

Most pupils take ten GCSEs/IGCSEs, including English Language and English Literature, Mathematics, Religious Studies, and one, two or three Sciences. To these may be added: Art & Design, Business, Computer Science, Drama, Food Preparation & Nutrition, French, CCF & HPQ, Geography, History, Music, Physical Education and Spanish up to a total of ten subjects. Some pupils take an additional qualification in Mathematics. GCSEs/IGCSEs are taken at the end of Year 11. Pupils take three linear A levels, although they may take four if they are studying Mathematics and Further Mathematics.

1.2 The curriculum provides full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age, giving pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Priority is given to pupils' acquisition of speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. Central to our curriculum is a development of spiritual and moral awareness. All subject areas contribute to 'Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural' (SMSC).

2. Values

2.1 Our curriculum is underpinned by the values and ethos of our School (see Mission Statement) and our virtues of love, courage and wisdom. The curriculum is the means by which the School achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to lead fulfilling lives.

3. Aims

Loughborough Amherst School aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum based on sound educational principles and catering for a range of interests and abilities. We aim to nurture the mind and the body and to develop in our pupils a desire for intellectual enquiry and self-improvement. The curriculum is at the heart of this aim, and we encourage every pupil to maximise their potential both within and beyond its framework. Whilst following the National Curriculum in outline, we aim to extend and complement this wherever possible and appropriate to enable pupils to follow their particular strengths and enthusiasms. The curriculum is kept under constant review to ensure that it evolves with the best approaches nationally and fits the changing requirements and expectations of pupils, parents and society. These include fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, as well as PSHE and Careers Education and Guidance. Specific policies are in place for PSHE and Careers Education and Guidance.

Effective teaching and learning is supported by:

- regular and effective feedback
- higher-order activities that support independent thinking
- a secure and supportive environment
- praise and positive reinforcement
- excellent relationships between all members of our school community, based on mutual respect
- high quality and sufficient resources
- effective planning with clear objectives
- a good balance of individual, group and whole class work
- a range of activities and a variety of teaching strategies and styles.

To this end, the schemes of work and curriculum maps for each subject are reviewed regularly by the Heads of Department and periodically by the Deputy Head (Academic). These schemes of

work reflect the depth and breadth of the curriculum which reflect the high standards at Loughborough Amherst and the academic requirements of public examinations.

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.
- d. Pupils acquire and develop core skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy.
- e. It takes into account:
 - Learning
 - Metacognition
 - Knowledge
 - Concepts
 - Skills
 - Thinking
 - Attitudes
- f. It is broad and introduces pupils to a wide range of experiences, knowledge and skills.
- g. It is balanced with a fair allocation of time for each subject area.
- h. It is relevant; designed to prepare pupils for the world of work and leisure.
- i. 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.
- j. It promotes equal opportunities and a positive attitude to diversity.
- k. It allows for differentiation in the way it is delivered to match pupils' needs, abilities and aptitudes.
- l. It is augmented and enhanced by many experiences outside the "formal curriculum" organised on a whole School, house, year, form, group or individual basis.
- m. 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 themes are to be taught in each term. We review our long-term plans on an annual basis.

5.2 We have created our own curriculum skills and knowledge lists that use much of the 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 White Rose scheme of work. Whilst the school provides access to resources such as Spelling Shed for spelling support, 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. We plan the curriculum carefully, so that there is coherence and full coverage of all aspects of the Curriculum 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 they do so.

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 Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and recognises the changes made for 2021. Our curriculum planning focuses on the Prime Areas of Learning and four specific areas of learning which focus on developing children's skills and experiences.

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. We adhere to the Curisorty Approach in our classroom to aid this.

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 Preparatory 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, Religious Studies, 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 and A Level. 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. This will appear on Progress Reports to parents alongside the current forecast grade for the pupil.

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 year groups, 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 for formative work, but can suffice for summative assessments (eg end of unit tests).

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. Co-Curricular Activities

16.1 There is a dynamic co-curricular programme focused on leadership, creativity, wellbeing and exercise, community and teamwork. A wide range of activities takes place outside the confines of the timetable but which we regard as of equal educational importance to anything inside the timetable.
