

THE CURRICULUM POLICY

Legal Status: Regulatory Requirements Part 1, paragraph 2(2) (i) to (x) Quality of Education Provided (curriculum)(teaching) of the Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England)(Amendment) Regulations.

Applies to:

The Whole School inclusive of activities outside of the normal hours;
All staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

Availability: this policy is made available to parents/guardians/carers, carers, staff and pupils from the school office and website.

Monitoring and Review: this policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headmaster. The Proprietor undertakes a formal review of the policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged by no later than one day from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Curriculum Planning is the responsibility of the Headmaster, Director of Studies and the Head of Special Needs (SENCO). All members of the teaching staff are consulted at the planning stage.
- 1.2 The Curriculum is weighted towards literacy and numerical work in recognition of the fact that most, if not all, pupils have specific learning difficulties, albeit to varying degrees;
- 1.3 To this end, there are at least seven, forty-minute periods of English and Mathematics a week in the Sixth Form, and seven forty-minute periods a week of both subjects in the Junior School, with a proportion of the English classes being taught by a mainstream subject specialist and a proportion being taught by qualified and experienced teachers in the field of Special Needs. Part of this allowance is daily literacy lesson is in place in the Junior School where boys are set according to their appropriate reading and/or spelling age.
- 1.4 Other timetabled subjects are Science, French, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Music, Design and Technology and Art. All of these subjects are taught to Common Entrance level. Touch Typing and ICT is taught up to the end of the Michaelmas term in the Lower Sixth (Year 7) and this lesson then switches to study skills and interview practice.
- 1.5 PSHEE is taught as one lesson per week in the Junior School and within the Curriculum for the Senior School. The junior school also have a drama lesson. Throughout the School elements of the PSHEE syllabus are included, most notably in the English, Science and Religious Studies syllabi.
- 1.6 Occasionally boys who require additional intervention may not learn French, but this is not encouraged.
- 1.7 Where there is an identified need, individual children are withdrawn on a rolling rota basis from subject classes for Speech and Language Therapy and/or Occupational Therapy.

- 1.8 Sport plays a large part in the ethos of the school and is played for approximately an hour on four afternoons of the week (Mon-Thurs) with regular competitive matches against other schools mostly on Wednesday afternoons.
- 1.9 Homework, referred to as 'prep', is set every week for classes in the Upper and Lower Sixth which is completed at the weekend. The Upper Sixth have an additional prep session on Tuesday from 6.05-6.35pm to ready them a little more for senior school life. Junior weekend prep is in the form of reading, spelling and occasional Mathematics. The Headmaster's weekly e-newsletter details each class's prep homework.
- 1.10 The Seventh Form, often known as 'Grandeers' made up of boys 're-visiting' the Upper Sixth, most of whom will be 14 years old when they leave Bruern Abbey, follows the Upper Sixth Curriculum. The boys are taught in one or other of the three Upper Sixth sets.
- 1.11 In the course of their subject teaching, teachers at Bruern Abbey strive to effectively prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

2. ENGLISH AND MATHEMATICS IN THE CURRICULUM

- 2.1 That 'proportion' referred to in 1.3 above depends upon the age of the pupil and upon the nature and severity of the difficulty or difficulties as diagnosed and documented through EP reports and assessments.
- 2.2 Boys in the Junior School (aged 8-11) will have some their English and Mathematics classes taught by staff with Special Needs' experience and qualifications, either within a whole-class approach or within smaller groups or, if deemed necessary by the SENCO, on a 1:1 or small group basis.
- 2.3 Generally, boys in the Sixth Form (NC years 7 and 8) will have only a proportion of their English classes structured in the way described in 1.3 above. Again, the Special Needs' provision may be delivered by a whole-class approach, but more likely by intervention, either on a 1:1 or in small groups.

3. SETTING IN THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

- 3.1 Following the strong recommendation of the late Dorian Yeo, the guru of Special Needs' Mathematics, the Junior School is set according to ability and potential in Mathematics and English. This is also combined with considering other factors such as the collective behaviour of pupils and their maturity. The sets are named after birds and the names change most years.
- 3.2 By the very nature of this arrangement, classes in all subjects in the Junior School are likely to be of mixed ages. This will require subject teachers to plan accordingly and to have the means of differentiation within their schemes of work.

4. SETTING IN THE SIXTH FORM

- 4.1 Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth are distinct entities corresponding with National Curriculum Years 7 and 8 respectively. The year groups are often set on both their English and Mathematical ability. The curriculum followed is the syllabi for the Common Entrance exam to senior schools.
- 4.2 In both years there is setting in English and Mathematics according to achievement, attainment and consultation with staff. Boys are taught in these groups across the whole curriculum. An equal number in each set is a desirable outcome.

5. THE EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The extra-curricular programme gives children the opportunity to learn a musical instrument (currently on offer are piano, organ, horn, trumpet, drums, guitar, bass guitar, ukulele, singing, violin and cello tuition). Boys are withdrawn from subject lessons on a rolling four week rota basis.
- 5.2 The Activities Co-ordinator will arrange a variety of activities for Monday evenings and Wednesday afternoons, some of which will be classed as 'optional extras' and the cost of which will be charged to the parents. There are also activities during games time that include swimming, golf, tennis, clay pigeon shooting and, when there is the demand, polo!

6. SETTING OUT OF WORK

Applicable to handwritten and to word-processed work:

- 6.1 All work must be dated.
- 6.2 Every piece of work, including Mathematics, must have a title.
- 6.3 One line must be left under the date and title. The date should be written on the second line down when using lined paper.
- 6.4 Full sentences should always be used where appropriate, unless instructed otherwise.
- 6.5 Ordinarily, word-processed work should be presented in Open Dyslexic, Gill sans MT or another sans serif font between letter size 10 and 14, except for headings which reflect the nature of the work.
- 6.6 Paragraphs must be evenly indented (handwriting only).

Whilst every boy is provided with a laptop and much written work will be done electronically, there is still a requirement to learn to handwrite.

Guidelines applicable to handwritten work only:

- 6.7 A suitable handwriting pencil or pen should be used for any neat written book/sheet. Teachers may prefer pencils to pens.
- 6.8 Only blue or black ink is acceptable unless for diagrams or if the member of staff feels that multi-colour will support the learning objectives.

ASSESSMENT

1. SPECIAL NEEDS

- 1.1 Ideally, every boy joining the school presents with an Educational Psychologist's report that is no less than two years old. Prospective pupils attend a low-key assessment morning. The information from both these sources is used to create an individual mind map which is the starting point for all teachers. Children identified as having individual difficulties may need further support from specialist teachers. Outside agencies will be offered for speech and language support, occupational therapy or counselling.
- 1.2 The SEND department has a range of assessments which can be used on a 1:1 basis to help staff identify specific areas of need. These can be targeted with individuals.

1.3 The very essence of Bruern means that members of staff have experience, a clear interest and are trained to deal with children with learning difficulties, therefore multi-sensory techniques and opportunities for overlearning can be very effective.

1.4 The School's on-going assessment policy will ensure:

- That every Junior school child will have a bi-annual standardised mathematics, reading and spelling assessment. These assessments are coordinated and monitored by the SENCO, the Head of Junior School and the Director of Studies. These standardised tests will also be supported by exams in Science, Humanities and French in the Michaelmas and Summer terms.
- Senior exams will be termly and based upon Common Entrance-type questions across the examined subject areas.
- All boys will sit formal examinations in November/December and May/June to assess their progress. Exams concessions will be implemented to enable every boy equal opportunity to demonstrate ability. "Mock" Common Entrance exams take place in March.

2. GENERAL SUBJECT ASSESSMENT

2.1 Bruern Abbey's Assessment Policy is based upon the following Terms of Reference. The other thing to make clear is that reviews of pupil's progress is often very much a qualitative process. The boys here have a number of differing factors that significantly impact on their progress as measured by standardised testing. Weak working memory, slow processing, the breadth and severity of their specific learning difficulties, self-esteem and anxieties surrounding their academics all play a significant role. That's why Bruern reports to parents across all subjects twice a term and also there's frequent communication between parents Headmaster and staff. The staff have a daily briefing run by the Headmaster to air any pupils for concern academically or pastorally this daily dialogue allows all the key players, including boarding staff and nurse to keep abreast of each pupil's progress.

The School's on-going Assessment:

- is based upon clear curriculum intentions
- is individually interpreted through Schemes of Work
- plays an integral part in classroom activities
- is appropriate to the task
- focuses on learning processes as well as on outcomes
- draws upon a wide range of evidence
- places achievement in context
- indicates strengths and identifies weaknesses
- involves pupils in reflection and review
- differentiates between individuals within a form
- informs about individual progress

2.2 The School's Records should:

- be on-going and cumulative
- be accessible, easy to interpret and above all useful
- identify and describe the efforts and achievements of the individual child (Reference – half term reports)
- show the attainment of each pupil and be useful as a guide to future schools and their suitability
- be based upon evidence, using different teaching styles and approaches – observation, asking questions, setting tasks/tests/exams and selecting examples of pupils' work

2.3 Good assessment practice will:

- assist the pupil as learner
- help the teacher as facilitator and evaluator
- give information to third and other interested parties

2.4 Good assessment practice has a number of specific functions:

- to focus on what a pupil can or cannot achieve (diagnostically)
 - to decide on what a pupil is to next achieve (formative)
 - to appraise a pupil's progress to date in order to inform all interested parties (summative)

2.5 Good assessment practice is:

- 'ipsative referenced' where an individual's present performance is compared with previous performance
- 'criterion referenced' where performance is related to one or more specific attainment targets as in the Common Entrance 11+, 12+ and 13+ syllabus and programmes of study

2.6 The teacher is concerned with:

- the context for learning
- the activity and how the pupil tackles it
- the evaluation of the pupil's performance

2.7 The teacher should seek to assess:

- to what extent planning intentions have been achieved
- the learning processes that have been involved
- the quality of the outcome
- the pupils understanding

RECORDING, MONITORING AND REPORTING

1. THE HALF-TERM REPORT SYSTEM

Each pupil has a half term report on which subject teachers put a grade A-E for Effort and 1-5 for Achievement. The pupil's performance and behaviour is then summarised by the Form Tutor noting particular areas of success both inside and outside the classroom and two or three targets for improvement.

1.1 The rationale behind this method of reporting is as follows:

- to improve communication between pupil and teachers, between tutor and pupil and between the School and the parents
- to provide an overview of a child's academic progress over a half termly period, enabling the tutor to hold more constructive tutorials

1.2 Effort and Achievement Grades

The Effort and Achievement Grades reflect a broad and subjective assessment of the child's academic progress. They are one means of monitoring individual needs within the context of Bruern's educational remit and a means of communicating this through to all interested parties.

The grades are largely 'ipsative' referenced, that is to say, an individual child's present performance is compared with his previous performance and/or with the standard and expectations that a teacher has of that individual child based on all the knowledge available to him. A degree of reference to criteria is likely from Year 7 as pupils are prepared for the Common Entrance examination but, perforce, greater emphasis is then placed on 'differentiation by output' rather than, hitherto, on 'differentiation by input'.

1.3 The rationale behind the use of this form of assessment/monitoring/reporting, as broad brushed as it may appear, is that it:

- gives the opportunity for children, who under a purely comparative and competitive system might consistently receive low grades, to gain higher grades, thereby boosting confidence and self-esteem
- rewards children whose efforts might otherwise not be fully reflected in the work they are producing
- enables the tutor to have a broad view of his/her tutee's academic progress and to keep the finger on the pulse

A	Achieving an excellent standard	1	Very good effort
B	Achieving a good standard	2	Good effort
C	Achieving an acceptable standard	3	Satisfactory effort
D	Below the standard accepted	4	Below satisfactory effort
E	Well below the standard expected	5	Unacceptable poor effort

2. REPORT WRITING

If the dialogue between home and school is to be fruitful, reports should look forward, should contain agenda as well as descriptions of achievement, and should encourage discussion of how pupil and teacher will together approach the next step in his learning. A good report needs to summarise, however, it should avoid unhelpful generalisation.

The report should relate directly to the pupil's progress. However carefully thought out and presented, a report will not be good unless it motivates and encourages the pupil to learn. Praise is a more powerful motivator than censure and the positive aspects of performance should always be emphasised. This is not to suggest that a report is to avoid the truth.

It does not help to call attention to a need for improvement or development without suggesting constructively how that need might be met, either within school or by home and school in partnership.

Recommendations for Reporting: What Makes a Good Report?

- 1.3 It is the School's Policy that Reports should:
- convey a clear impression of personal knowledge of the pupil, within the constraints of the time available in which pupil and teacher work together
 - identify and comment on particular strengths, describing success and progress and focusing on key aspects of the pupil's learning
 - identify aims, ensuring that one or two, but not necessarily all, development needs are identified. Points for development might include, for example:
 - areas of strength, the potential of which can be exploited ;
 - aspects of the curriculum in which limited progress has been made but in which further development can be made;
 - suggestions for more effective approaches to tasks and to school work in general including where appropriate, comments on such matters as behaviour and attitude (but remembering that poor behaviour and attitude often reflects poor teaching, a point rarely missed by parents).
- 1.4 Targets should be specific and attainable, with particular strategies identified to approach them, and should:
- encourage motivation through a constructive approach (remembering that written reports can have a powerful influence on a child's approach to future work and can strongly affect parents' attitudes to the school and their ability to help their children to learn).
- 1.5 Reports written by Tutors should:
- draw together what has been said by subject teachers, summarising strengths and weaknesses.

- identify two or three ‘development needs’ from across the curriculum as areas for concentration, to be reviewed at the next staff-parent consultation and referred to in a subsequent report(s).
- comment on personal aspects including self-awareness, self-esteem, independence and interdependence, willingness to work with others, empathy, interpersonal relationships, concern for others, decision-making and problem-tackling, perseverance, enthusiasm, extra-curricular activities etc.

1.6 It is not School policy that Reports should:

- contain too much detail about the syllabus or attainment outcomes and targets, although staff might wish to provide background information about the work of the class, group or individual pupil in an introductory paragraph, particularly if they are likely to have the opportunity of talking with parents at staff/parent meetings; however, this should not form more than 25% of the entire report;
- refer to the inappropriate placement of a child
- make moral judgements about children based on pupils’ family backgrounds or social circumstances.
- contain indecipherable jargon

1.7 Further Guidelines to Report Writing

At Staff, Academic and Senior Management Committee Meetings, the following criteria for report writing were established:

- reports should be typewritten in a standard font of Gill Sans MT size 12
- reports should contain as little ‘pasting’ as possible
- deadlines must be met
- subject reports should be proof read by tutors and tutor reports proof read by the Headmaster, but it is the responsibility of the report writer to minimise the number of careless errors.
- split infinitives, finishing a sentence with a preposition and incorrect spelling and punctuation are not acceptable.

The key to effective report writing is systematic assessment and recording. The summary of the pupil’s strengths, development needs and overall level of achievement and effort should emerge logically and smoothly from what has been entered in the teacher records.

2. THE END-OF-TERM REPORT SYSTEM & PARENT MEETINGS

- 2.1 Each pupil receives one end-of-term report per year and two parents meetings. The pupil's performance and behaviour is commented upon by all teachers who have timetabled classes with that pupil. Particular areas of success and two or three targets for improvement will be included as per previous guidance.
- 2.2 A summative assessment will also be included for all formally examined subjects. Ipsative referencing will be used by all non-examined subjects.
- 2.3 Each end-of-term report will include a summarising comment from the Form Tutor and Headmaster.
- 2.4 Parents' evenings are held bi-annually for all pupils. These are spread evenly within the three terms; for the term that parents attend an evening no end of term report is written to avoid duplicating the information discussed and then unnecessarily re-written. Below is a table outlining Exams, Reports and Parent Meetings per term over the course of the year.

Michaelmas Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Juniors Meet your son's tutor – informal meeting		
Half Term Reports: Juniors, Lower & Upper Sixth	Half Term Reports: Juniors, Lower & Upper Sixth	Half Term Reports: Juniors, Lower & Upper Sixth
Christmas Exams: Junior, Upper and Lower Sixth Parent Meetings: Juniors & Upper Sixth End of Term Reports: Lower Sixth	End of Term Exams: Upper & Lower Sixth Parent Meetings: Lower & Upper Sixth End of Term Reports: Juniors	End of Year Exams Juniors, Upper & Lower Sixth Parent Meetings Junior & Lower Sixth End of Term Leaver's book – Upper Sixth

Authorised by	Resolution of the Principal
Date	May 2017

Effective date of the policy	May 2017
Circulation	P Principal / all staff / parents / pupils on request Included in the Staff Handbook on website

Review September 2017