

33. 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 and Assistant Head (Academic). 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.

Curriculum aims:

Throughout the school, the curriculum provides pupils with experiences in life skills and linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education, appropriate for their ages and aptitudes. The curriculum is delivered through a range of auditory, kinaesthetic and visual teaching styles to suit the special educational needs of our pupils, thus enabling progress to be made by all. The curriculum is balanced and broadly based, and strongly promotes the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils. It prepares our pupils well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British Society, including the provision for their economic well-being. Thus, we ensure that pupils develop an understanding of fundamental British Values and uphold these throughout the curriculum

I. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Curriculum planning is the responsibility of the Headmaster and Assistant Head (Academic). All members of the teaching staff are consulted at the planning stage.
- 1.2 Organisation and planning: The curriculum is planned in three phases: long, medium and short-term plans. The long term plans/schemes of work indicate what topics are to be taught in each term and to which boys; they are reviewed regularly. It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to upload the LTPs and MTPs to the Google Drive at the start of each half term. The Assistant Head (Academic) oversees all planning and offers guidance when necessary.
- 1.3 All teaching staff are responsible for ensuring their medium terms plans contain clear objectives, teaching strategies and differentiation appropriate for all boys in their class during a specific term.
- 1.4 The pro forma for LTPs and MTPs are accessible for all staff on the Google Drive.
- 1.5 Short term plans are those that our teachers write on a weekly/daily basis. There is no common format for the short-term planning as it is viewed that, as professionals, teachers should use a format that suits their own style of planning and delivery.
- 1.6 All planning is referred to during lesson observations and feedback, and as such should be reviewed and updated throughout the academic year. Planning is also reviewed according to results of formative and summative assessments.

- 1.7 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;
- 1.8 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.
- 1.9 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 discretely across all year groups in all subjects, with a focus on typing (Nessy program) in literacy lessons in the junior school. All juniors have a weekly study skills lesson and interview practice.
- 1.10 PSHEE is taught as one lesson per week in the junior school and within the curriculum for the senior school. Throughout the school elements of the PSHEE syllabus are included, most notably in the English, science and religious studies syllabi. It is taught in line with our whole school values and further details of the PSHEE syllabus can be found in the PSHEE policy.
- 1.11 Occasionally boys who require additional intervention may not learn French, but this is not encouraged.
- 1.12 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.
- 1.13 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.
- 1.14 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, Lexia and occasional mathematics. The Headmaster's weekly e-newsletter details each class's prep homework.
- 1.15 The seventh form, often known as 'Grandees' 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.
- 1.16 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. Senior boys are given support and guidance on choosing senior schools and career paths through visiting speakers, trips and extra curricular activities, in line with our Ignite programme. Boys are also advised and supported with choices regarding adapting their timetable to suit their needs, E.g. taking extra literacy classes in lieu of French.

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 educational 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, saxophone, 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!
- 5.3 The Ignite programme provides children with opportunities to consider future career paths, through visiting speakers and organised trips.

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 Full sentences should always be used where appropriate, unless instructed otherwise.
- 6.4 Ordinarily, word-processed work should be presented in Open Dyslexic, Gill sans MT or another sans serif font between letter size 12 and 14, except for headings which reflect the nature of the work.
- 6.5 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. Precursive and cursive handwriting is encouraged, although not essential; the requirement is for handwriting to be legible. The SEN department has handwriting programs for boys who require additional support.

- 6.6 A suitable handwriting pencil or pen should be used for any neat written book/sheet. Teachers may prefer pencils to pens.

- 6.7 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.

7. MARKING GUIDELINES:

- 7.1** Subject teachers are responsible for ensuring all boys' work is marked promptly and clearly.
- 7.2** Given the special needs of our boys in relation to reading ability, the use of coloured pens, stickers and stamps is recommended to encourage boys to read the comments given. Stars (House points) are also to be awarded as often as possible.
- 7.3** Time should be allocated in lessons for boys to read and discuss their marked work with the teacher and to be given detailed verbal feedback.
- 7.4** All marks and exam results should be issued sensitively to children, on an individual basis. It is then up to the child whether he shares the information with his peers. Boys should not be given the results of any exams before all the exams have been completed.
- 7.5** Marking should be positive and used as a tool to boost the boys' confidence and self-esteem.
- 7.6** Correcting of spellings and punctuation should be limited unless this is the objective of the piece of work. Otherwise work should be marked for subject knowledge rather than spelling/grammar.
- 7.7** Numerical marking is not always necessary, but as far as possible, comments should include a target to ensure boys understand how they could improve.
- 7.8** Success criteria, checklists and peer marking should also be used to encourage boys to take ownership of their own learning and development and to reflect.
- 7.9** Where verbal feedback is given in place of written comments, teachers should note this with a stamp on the piece of work.
- 7.10** In **formative assessments** marking should be **positive** and **motivating** with constructive comments, encouraging the pupil for what has been achieved, helping him understand strengths and weaknesses.
- 7.11** **Summative** assessments should be assessed formatively at first and given a **mark** or **grade**. Formative verbal feedback should enable the child to focus on improvement.

ASSESSMENT

I. 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 standardised mathematics (PUMA), reading (NGRT) and spelling (HAST) assessments three times per year (once per term). These assessments are coordinated

and monitored by the SENCO, the Assistant Head (Academic) and the Head of Numeracy. These standardised tests will also be supported by exams in English, science, humanities and French in the Michaelmas and Summer terms.

- All standardised and summative exam results are entered onto the Google Drive exam results grid to enable all staff to monitor and track progress.
- To help track progress compared to national expectations, at the end of Year 6, 11+ examination papers will be sat by approximately 75% of boys in English and science. Maths will be assessed by PUMA.
- 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.
- All assessments are used to promote progression for all and results are used to inform planning.

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 MTPs
- 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

I. THE HALF-TERM REPORT SYSTEM

All reports are completed on the ISAMS 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.

I.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

I.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'.

I.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

*Assessment and reporting tracker to be inserted here.

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?

2.1 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).

2.2 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).

2.3 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.

2.4 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

2.5 Further Guidelines to Report Writing

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

- reports should be typewritten in a standard font on ISAMS
- only the languages should be written with a capital letter the start i.e. English, French, Latin. All other subjects should be written in lower case.
- 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. All reports are proofread by a team of senior tutors and the Assistant Head (Academic) before being sent home.
- 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.

NB. Help is available. Please ask the Assistant Head (Academic) for further guidance on report writing.

3. **THE END-OF-TERM REPORT SYSTEM & PARENT MEETINGS**

- 3.1 Each pupil receives one end-of-term report per year and two parents' meetings. The pupil's performance and behaviour are 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.
- 3.2 A summative assessment will also be included for all formally examined subjects. Ipsative referencing will be used by all non-examined subjects.
- 3.3 Each end-of-term report will include a summarising comment from the Form Tutor and Headmaster.
- 3.4 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 parents' meetings per term over the course of the year.

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

Signed:

Policy Effective: February 2019

Review date: February 2019

John Floyd
Headmaster