

Senior School Curriculum Policy

[Next update – September 2018]

Senior School Curriculum - Policy

Priory School is committed to providing a rigorous academic and intellectual education which will challenge and engage pupils, and offer continuity and progression of learning to foster a life-long love of learning, both for its own sake and to provide them with a secure foundation on which to continue into Higher Education and into the careers of their choice.

The Senior School curriculum leads on from that of the Junior School and shares the same set of values and overriding principles. It is intended that the school as a whole provides a seamless and consistent policy in the education it offers, and the values it fosters.

All pupils of compulsory school age receive a full-time supervised education. This education is intended to give pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, human and social, physical, spiritual, aesthetic and creative aspects. For Years 7 – 11 (Senior 1 to 5) the core curriculum of subjects provides the opportunity for pupils to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. These are further developed in their other subjects. Pupils are taught 25 periods per week, each of 1 hour.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 (Senior 1, 2 and 3), all pupils receive a broad introductory curriculum which gives them experience in all of the aspects outlined above. Thereafter an element of choice is introduced to enable pupils to explore those subjects more fully for which they have a natural enthusiasm and/or aptitude.

In addition, with the Sixth Form now open, GCSE teaching is increasingly being seen not only as an end in itself, but also as a prelude to A Level and beyond. A reasonably wide range of subjects is offered, leading on from the current Senior School curriculum.

In Year 9 (Senior 3), all pupils study the core curriculum of English Language and Literature, Mathematics and Science and Computer Science. In addition, there are other subjects: a choice of one Modern Language, History, Geography, Drama, Art, Religious Studies, as well as PE and Games.

In Year 10 (Senior 4), pupils start on the two-year GCSE course of studies. Here, the core curriculum is English Language and Literature, Mathematics and Science. To this core are added a further four subjects selected by each pupil from Computer Science, French, Spanish, Italian, History, Geography, Religious Studies, Art, Business Studies. These are arranged into option blocks which encourage the students to follow a broad and balanced pathway which will provide the best possible basis for further studies to A Level and university.

Further pupil preferences may be met by the assistance of external tutors. Pupils also have PE lessons and Games.

The school aims to run any course in which there is sufficient demand and can be effectively resourced in both teaching and material terms. If numbers opting for a course are too few, it may not be possible to run it in a particular year.

Monitoring is conducted both within subject teaching and across the subjects, including, as in the Junior School, regular liaison with parents. Parents' evenings are held to assist this process, and also to enable discussion of career options and the subjects relevant to that at GCSE level. Individual meetings with pupils and parents are also frequent.

Reports are written at regular intervals throughout the school year in order to monitor pupils' progress and to communicate this effectively with parents.

The School is also developing ISAMS, a database into which all exam results and other progress information is entered to aid the monitoring process. Results of continuous assessments of pupils' progress and twice-yearly examinations are loaded onto the Pupil Progress Database ISAMS to provide an accumulating record of the performance of each pupil to allow proper assessment and monitoring of academic progress. This is available to all staff in a digitally readable format.

PSHE is delivered within the curriculum, especially in Science, Religious Studies and Civics lessons. Once per term it is the aim to have a day focused specifically on PSHE in which specialists and practitioners conduct age-appropriate workshops for all students throughout the day. Pupils also participate in and discuss class assemblies, planned and performed to the school, which deal with age-appropriate, topical and relevant issues to prepare them for life in the wider world. This is led by the form tutors.

Each pupil, regardless of age, participates in a full Games programme on one afternoon of the week.

Careers guidance is supported by visits from outside agencies, speakers and advisors. Priory School supports the organisation of work experience for Year 11 (Senior 5) pupils during school holiday periods. One-to-one advice is given to pupils by staff and meetings with practitioners are arranged at pupils' request. There is also a comprehensive programme of Tuesday Talks attended by Year 5 – Year 13(U6th), which introduces the pupils to a wide range of aspirational jobs, including high-level positions in the armed forces and emergency services, careers in NATO and creative careers in art.

The School actively seeks to draw on the parent body to enrich the pupils' awareness of the range of possible careers available to them. This is done through the Tuesday Talk programme, or through careers 'speed-dating' evenings, as well as through talks by interested individuals or small groups.

The School has links with other organisations such as UKSA and the Island Studio School to ensure that pupils are given the best possible guidance and choose the most appropriate pathway for their futures.

The school has a Learning Support department, which is responsible for screening all pupils in Year 7 (Senior 1) and all new entrants up to Year 11 (Senior 5). Pupils complete tests in Mathematics, English and NVRs, which enable the department to note any indicators of special educational needs. Teachers also use the data gathered in their planning to ensure that there is both sufficient support and suitable opportunities for challenge in their lessons, according to differing abilities.

Parents of pupils who are identified as having a special educational need are informed and additional support either in class or externally is arranged by agreement. Where this is more than can be covered by the support teachers, further additional support is arranged by private agreement. The appropriate information is passed to the subject teachers and a co-ordinated approach is adopted for the benefit of the individual pupil.

Where a pupil has a statement of educational needs, this also involves liaison with the local authority and with relevant external agencies, as well as the support from the Learning Support Department. Further details of this programme can be found in the School's Learning Difficulties and Special Educational Needs Policy document.

Authorised by the Principal, Mr E J Matyjaszek

And the Head of the Senior School, Mrs E Soar

October 2017