



Bancroft's Preparatory School

Curriculum Policy

September 2023

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INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Our curriculum aims to be three-dimensional.

- Firstly, our curriculum provides the bright children who attend our school with an exceptionally high level of academic challenge. Our pupils are expected to master the expectations of the primary national curriculum whilst also encountering concepts that the majority of children would not meet until later on in their education. As a result, our children's academic attainment is well above national expectations.
- Secondly, our curriculum offers a broad range of experiences and opportunities for our pupils. As well as the full range of National Curriculum subjects, our pupils benefit from timetabled lessons in Philosophy, Outdoor Learning, Drama and Personal Development. Our timetabled curriculum is supplemented by a rich co-curricular programme, which includes clubs, music, performances, sport and competitions. As a result, our children have the opportunity to develop interests and enjoy success in many different areas of learning.
- Finally, our curriculum promotes a deep level of engagement from our pupils. Through every subject, we promote the learning dispositions of curiosity, initiative, persistence, risk-taking, resilience, collaboration, critical thinking, excellence and reflectiveness. We believe this will enable our pupils to develop as effective learners, as well as nurturing key skills that will help them throughout their lives. We expect our pupils to engage genuinely and meaningfully with their own learning: to reflect on their own work and to evaluate their own progress. As a result, our children develop into well-rounded individuals and self-sufficient learners.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION

Our school curriculum document outlines what we expect our children to learn in each subject during each of their four years at the school. It is written in narrative form, rather than in bullet-pointed objectives. We do not believe it is appropriate or even feasible to break every area of learning into 25 minute or 50-minute objectives. Rather, we believe that education is a journey during which some things take longer than others, some areas overlap and meaningful amounts of time are needed for practice and consolidation. So, for example, some lessons might have a single specific objective e.g., identifying the subject of a sentence or using the standard long division algorithm. However, some lessons might serve several different objectives. A well-pitched reading comprehension session should enable children to make progress in most of the skills outlined in our reading curriculum. Equally, a challenging maths investigation will enable pupils to develop and apply many different skills from our maths curriculum. Learning is complex and requires different approaches in different situations. Our curriculum is flexible and it is reviewed by subject leaders annually. We are keen to adapt to a fast-changing world and events going on around us.

Most subjects have a set number of 25-minute lessons allocated to them per week. We believe that the relationship between a form teacher and the children in their class is a crucial one so every form teacher spends a significant proportion of the week teaching their own class. At any one time, there are two-year groups in the school who are learning French and two who are learning German. Some subjects are taught on a rotation system whereby classes do each one for one hour a week for two half-terms per year.

Prep School Subject Allocation 2023-24				
Subject	Alpha	Beta	Prep 1	Prep 2
Maths	10	10	10	10
English	10	10	10	10
Science	4	4	4	4
French/German	2	1	2	2
History	3	3	3	3
Geography	3	3	3	3
Computing	2	2	3	3
Art	3	3	2	2
Music	1	1	2	2
Drama	1	1	1	Rehearsal
Design and Technology (DT)	rotation	rotation	rotation	rotation
Outdoor Learning	rotation	rotation	rotation	rotation
Philosophy	rotation	rotation	rotation	rotation
Games	4	5	5	5
PE/Swimming	6	6	3	3
Personal, Social, Health and Emotional Education (PSHEE)	2	2	2	2
Religious Studies (RS)	1	1	2	2
Reading	2	2	2	2
Form Time	3	3	3	3
Total	60	60	60	60

PLANNING

Every teacher in the school is responsible and accountable for the delivery of the school's curriculum in each of the subjects and year groups that they teach. Although the school does not routinely expect written planning to be submitted in any specific format, we still have clear expectations when it comes to the planning process. Subject leaders and members of the Senior Leadership Team will ensure these expectations are being met both through monitoring of teaching and children's work, as well as through regular conversations with staff and children:

- Topics and areas of learning are arranged logically throughout the year to ensure coverage of the school's curriculum for each subject for every child.

- In some subjects, more detailed guidance is provided by subject leaders. For example, in maths, where the order in which concepts are taught is especially crucial, the subject leader updates and disseminates a scheme of work which breaks the curriculum down week by week for each year group. In sensitive areas of PSHEE, such as Relationship and Sex Education, more prescriptive guidance will sometimes be issued by the PSHEE subject leader.
- The pace of teaching and learning is brisk, challenging and engaging, ensuring that children of all ability levels are able to talk with confidence and enthusiasm about the curriculum areas they have covered.
- Careful thought is given to the diverse needs of children in each class, especially those with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), to ensure all of them are equipped to succeed and make progress against the expectations of our curriculum.
- Teaching resources are selected or created to facilitate specific learning; areas of learning are not selected or invented in order to justify the use of a specific resource.
- Regardless of what form it takes, planning is shared with all teachers and learning support assistants involved in delivering it well in advance of lessons.
- We ask teachers to save any useful documentation around planning and resources in the relevant folders on the staff shared area as they may be of use to themselves or other colleagues in future years.

PEDAGOGY

The teachers at Bancroft's Prep School have a wide range of different personalities and this inevitably comes across in the differences between our approaches to teaching. This is something we embrace and celebrate. However, there are aspects of our approach to teaching where some broad but consistent expectations are necessary:

- All teachers are required to maintain high personal and professional standards at all times and to hold their pupils to high standards of behaviour in accordance with the school's code of conduct and behaviour policy.
- It is important to be mindful of what we know about how children learn, especially in terms of the relationship between working memory and long-term memory. This includes ensuring children have the opportunity to retrieve prior learning before new learning is introduced and that they have adequate time to practise new concepts and methods.
- Timely and meaningful feedback is as essential pillar of good teaching. The section on Marking and Feedback sets out our expectations in this regard.
- Learning should be a happy and enjoyable experience. This does not mean every lesson needs to be "all singing and all dancing." What matters more is that children feel safe, encouraged and motivated by their teachers and derive a sense of satisfaction from what they are achieving at school. Although we are all very different, the teachers in our school pride ourselves on building warm, respectful relationships in our classrooms.
- Teaching goes hand in hand with assessment and we encourage all our teachers to monitor pupils' understanding of their learning closely through rigorous questioning, scrutiny of their work and individual conversations.

MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Perhaps the most fundamental pedagogical duty of a teacher is to provide their pupils with timely, appropriate, personal feedback. The most important way in which such feedback takes place is through conversations and interactions during lessons. Another way in which it can take place in some subjects is through marking in children's books. The way in which feedback is given will depend on the task and we encourage teachers to use a range of techniques including:

- Immediate verbal feedback- this is often the most useful. If teachers think it will help a child to remember the advice they've given them, they might ask them to write it down in their book themselves.
- Very often, the impact of a lesson will be such that a child completes a task exactly as required. In such a situation, a simple expression of praise and acknowledgement is sufficient.
- Some tasks may have specific answers that the teacher shares at the end of the lesson so children can mark their work themselves.
- Some pieces of work might lead a teacher to decide to write a comment in the book- this might be a brief reminder about something (e.g., "plurals don't need apostrophes") or a more detailed observation about the piece of work.
- Teachers may decide to pick up particular spelling errors or other misconceptions as they occur. We encourage teachers to think about how to prioritise these so as not to cover a child's work with overwhelming numbers of such corrections. We also encourage them to pick up such errors in a clear and consistent way.
- A teacher's knowledge of a particular child might also have an impact on the sort of marking that is appropriate. For example, if a child has made particularly good progress or put in more effort than usual, especially effusive praise might be in order. Alternatively, a teacher may want to set a specific challenge or target.
- Marking is a form of communication and there is no harm in using it to build relationships and morale. For example, teachers might want to include a little joke in their marking, or a reference to something funny that happened in the lesson.

What is important is that children receive the feedback they need in order to improve. Subject leaders and members of the Senior Leadership Team speak to children regularly, often while looking through their books with them, to ensure that the feedback they receive is having the impact that it should.

BOOKS AND PRESENTATION

Children in our school have individual books for English, Maths, Science, French or German, History, Geography and Personal Development. These books serve as a record of children's learning and achievement in those subjects. Children are expected to write neatly and carefully in these books and to take pride in the work they do in them.

Every piece of work should have a date in the top right-hand corner of the page. Days and months should be written in words except in maths where the date should be written in numerals. Each piece of work should also have a title, which should be underlined in red. Encouraging children to reflect on their own learning is an important part of our philosophy and we encourage children to jot down their own reflections about a task when they have completed it, evaluating their own progress and/or considering any next steps.

It is our policy to use green pen for marking in order to provide consistency and simplicity across the school. This applies to all marking either by, or derived from, the teacher. So, for example, if children are self-correcting their work based on answers the teacher has given them, or recording verbal

feedback from the teacher, this can also be in green. We ask children to write their own reflections and make their own amendments or corrections in red. If feedback from other children is invited on a piece of work, this should be on post-it notes or stuck in on a separate piece of paper.

Children also have rough books for notes, jottings or activities that don't need to go in the more formal books. While standards of presentation do not need to be quite the same, children are discouraged from defacing or doodling in their rough books.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

Over the course of the year, we aim to keep parents updated about their children's progress at school. Lines of communication are always open and we're always happy to answer general questions as they arise. However, there are also several stages throughout the year when we offer more formal feedback.

To begin with, in the first half of the Autumn Term, all parents are invited to a brief meeting with their child's form teacher. This meeting is largely pastoral in nature and the purpose of it is simply to discuss how children have settled in to the new school year.

Three times a year, in December, March and July, parents receive a set of attitude grades, which represents each subject teacher's overall assessment of their child's organisation, focus, participation and collaboration with others during their lessons. The attitude grades are as follows:

- Exceptional
- Very Good
- Good
- Variable
- Needs Improvement

In January, we hold parents' consultation meetings that are more academic in nature. These are an opportunity for parents to discuss their child's progress with their form teacher, English teacher and Maths teacher. At these meetings, contextualised data will be shared both from internal assessments and nationally-standardised tests in English and Maths, so that parents can understand how their child's achievement compares both to national expectations and the average here at Bancroft's.

In the Spring, we hold an open evening where parents are invited into school to meet all the staff, including their child's other subject teachers if they wish.

At the end of the Summer Term, parents receive a "valedictory report" which celebrates their child's achievements throughout the school year. While this report will flag up any significant issues that still need to be addressed and while it will contain a final set of attitude grades, the form teacher's written comments will accentuate the positive and highlight their child's accomplishments during the academic year.

LEARNING SUPPORT

Learning support is provided for those pupils who are achieving either significantly above or below the expected levels for pupils of their age, or for any other pupils whose neurodiversity might require special consideration in order for them to learn effectively. We are a selective school, and the majority of the pupils are working at levels well above the national norms. This means it is essential we compare a child's attainment and progress against those expected for pupils at our school and not solely against

nationally expected norms. A detailed outline of Learning Support provision can be found in our Learning Support Policy.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES

Classrooms are the responsibility of both the teachers and the pupils. Successful classroom organisation contributes to effective learning. Expectations about the management of classrooms are as follows:

- Children have their own desk space which they are encouraged to keep tidy;
- Classrooms are equipped with books and resources appropriate for age range/subjects taught. Specialist resources will be stored in appropriate resource cupboards.
- These will be regularly audited by the subject coordinator, and consumables will be replenished when necessary. Subject Leaders will make resource requests in their annual budget bids.
- Pupils will be taught how to use equipment safely and with care and respect.
- Resources will reflect cultural diversity and have consideration of gender and equal opportunities issues.

HOMEWORK

Homework is used to reinforce and consolidate children's learning and to extend it beyond the classroom.

All children at Bancroft's Prep are expected to read independently for at least fifteen minutes a day outside school hours and ideally for longer. In addition, they are usually required to complete one additional piece of English homework over each weekend which should take no longer than 45 minutes to complete. Children will usually receive two pieces of maths homework per week, each of which should take no longer than 45 minutes to complete.

For other subjects, children might receive homework occasionally but these will usually be in the form of projects, revision or independent research and they will have plenty of time to complete them.

MONITORING

Informal monitoring is carried out on an ongoing basis through conversations that subject leaders and members of the Senior Leadership Team have with children and colleagues. All teachers are encouraged to visit one another's lessons and learn more about what is happening in parts of the school that they don't usually see as part of their timetabled commitments.

Formal monitoring takes place in the form of subject audits, which are carried out on a fortnightly basis by subject leaders and/or members of the Senior Leadership Team, although not during very busy parts of the year such as the 7+ testing period. Each a week, a different subject and year group will be the focus of the audit. During the week prior to the date of the audit, the members of staff responsible for the audit will drop into lessons in the relevant subject and year group(s) and then, on the date of the audit itself, they will speak to a sample group of children about their learning in that subject and look through their work with them. They will then send a brief report to the staff responsible for teaching the relevant subject and year group(s) outlining all the evidence they collected of the positive impact of their work on their children, as well as letting them know about any areas where evidence was harder to find. Subject audits assess the impact of our work on our pupils- individual staff members are not named in the reports.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

One of the greatest strengths of Bancroft's is that we are a diverse and multi-faith community in which all pupils have opportunities to develop their own spiritual life and learn about the beliefs and values of others. Our ethos is one of mutual respect, and acceptance of those of all traditions and backgrounds.

The provision of SMSC at Bancroft's is tailored to the family backgrounds, ages and abilities of our whole school community. We work to ensure that this provision, whether as part of collective worship in Chapel, assemblies, pastoral time or dedicated PSHE lessons, will be acceptable and beneficial to the whole school community.

The aims of this provision are:

- (i) enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- (ii) enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law;
- (iii) encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;
- (iv) provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England;
- (v) assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions; and
- (vi) encourage pupils to respect 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 aims of collective worship at Bancroft's are to provide the opportunity for pupils to:

1. Experience acts of worship that are inclusive and that reflect on diverse theistic ideas and the difficulties posed for religious belief in the modern world.
2. Reflect on ideas of morality that are in line with Christian values as well as those of other faith backgrounds and their own beliefs.
3. Develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values.
4. Consider spiritual and moral issues

PSHEE AND PROMOTION OF BRITISH VALUES

The development of pupils as responsible and informed citizens, and the fostering of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, are at the heart of the whole educational experience at Bancroft's Prep School. Our personal Development programme is one way in which these objectives are met. They might also be addressed informally in other areas of the curriculum.

Personal Development includes:

- Religious Studies
- Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Education
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education.
- Relationship and Sex Education

These lessons are designed to address issues around these themes and, as with all subjects, we encourage children to have an open dialogue with teachers.

The curriculum draws on guidelines for PSHEE and Citizenship, with adaptations suitable for the specific challenges and atmosphere present in a preparatory school of our nature. Aspects of it, especially lower down the school are taught through circle time. It is vital that every class teacher embraces circle time as a valuable team building, discussion promoting and positive experience. The curriculum progresses through the years with specific topics, such as Mental Health, Online Safety and Sex and Relationships, revisited at a more advanced level as the age group increases. Each half term focuses on educating children about things that affect them directly and indirectly.

1. A programme for each year group is produced under the direction of the PSHEE leader. The programme is monitored, reviewed and adapted on a regular basis to ensure that it meets any new challenges or difficulties that our pupils face and any significant developments or issues facing the modern world, especially when it comes to new technology and online safety.
2. A variety of resources are available. An effort has been made to make these user-friendly for class teachers and stimulating for pupils. Resources are regularly updated.
3. Topics include health education, anti-bullying, personal safety and well-being, financial awareness, sex and relationships, citizenship and celebrating diversity. The aim of the PSHEE programme in respect of citizenship is to actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths. These are implicitly and explicitly highlighted in the PSHEE programme e.g., Britishness and the values associated with citizenship are covered across Years 3 - 6. These include democracy and how the law works in Britain. This enables pupils to distinguish between right and wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England. These topics serve to highlight the British commitment to justice, tolerance, and equality. Pupils are expected to gain a broad understanding of and respect for public institutions and services in England, such as the police, NHS and the welfare state throughout the course of their time at Bancroft's. This is also achieved through our Junior Citizenship trip in Year 6 as well as discussions during PSHEE lessons.

Staff are encouraged to challenge behaviour in school that is contrary to fundamental British values.

1. As a result of the PSHEE programme the school would expect that pupils will have:

- a) An understanding of how citizens can influence decision making through the democratic process – this is also achieved through elections to our school council, whole school assemblies and phase assemblies at the time of a General Election.
- b) An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their well-being and safety.
- c) An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law.
- d) An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour. Pupils are also encouraged to celebrate each other's faiths and understand different cultural traditions – this is done through assemblies, Chapel, Religious Studies and class discussions.
- e) This is also promoted through the chapel programme that the Chaplain has regard for.
- f) An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination and encouraging respect for other people. This is also promoted through whole school assemblies and the chapel programme.

Reviewed by Tim Paramour (Director of Studies) September 2023

2. The scheme of learning is flexible to meet the needs and interests of pupils and Class teachers. Some sessions may involve the whole year group. Class groups also meet separately and the Class teacher can shape his/her own programme, although the key topics set for each half term are covered by all Class teachers.

3. Pupils are encouraged to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence which goes hand in hand with the school's stated aims of ensuring that pupils develop into self-assured, confident, happy, young adults. Pupils are also encouraged to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated as well as to society more widely. This is achieved by celebrating success through whole school and House assemblies.

4. All teachers are reminded that they must not in the day-to-day course of their teaching promote partisan political views. This means that when political issues are discussed or arise pupils are made aware that there are normally countervailing views and a balance is struck between the opinions and beliefs discussed. The school takes a common-sense approach, for example achieving balance in the range of topics discussed over a period of time.

MUSIC LESSONS

Bancroft's offers individual instrumental lessons. A rotating timetable, organised by the Director of Music, should ensure pupils do not repeatedly miss the same part of the same lesson in consecutive weeks

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Our curriculum is planned and delivered to fully support the age, ability and aptitude of every child. We celebrate every child and enhance learning through equality of opportunity. We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and access to all, regardless of gender, race, special needs, class or faith;

For further details please see the Equal Opportunities Policy