



Curriculum Policy

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Bancroft's
Independent Co-educational Day School 7–18

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Overview

The curriculum at Bancroft's aims to fulfil the School's objective of providing a "broad, balanced and forward-looking curriculum relevant to the aspirations of the pupils and their parents together with a wide-ranging programme of opportunities both within and outside the school day".

In particular, the curriculum aims to ensure that:

- Pupils experience a broad education across linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas.
- Subject matter is appropriate to pupils' ages and aptitudes, including pupils with identified additional needs.
- Where a pupil has an EHCP, Bancroft's education fulfils its requirements.
- Pupils develop skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy.
- Personal, social and health education reflects the School's aims and ethos.
- Appropriate careers guidance is provided for pupils receiving secondary education.
- For all pupils, including those above compulsory school age, the programme of activities is appropriate to their needs.
- All pupils are given opportunities to learn and make progress.
- Pupils are well prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The curriculum is designed to remain broad and balanced from Thirds (Year 7) to Fifth Form (Year 11), so that pupils develop secure foundations across linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas before specialising in the Sixth Form and beyond. This breadth is intended to keep future pathways open and to ensure that choices made earlier in the school do not unnecessarily restrict later academic options.

Within this broad curriculum, all pupils study English literature and language, maths and science from Thirds to Fifths. Pupils also study at least one language, although this requirement may be met through Latin and Classical Greek rather than through a modern language. Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE) forms part of the core curriculum in Thirds to Lower Fourth, during which pupils study a range of world religions alongside related human and social issues. Across these subjects and the wider curriculum, pupils continue to develop skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy.

The development of pupils as responsible and informed citizens, and the fostering of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is at the heart of the whole educational experience at Bancroft's. Preparing pupils for later life, and for the challenges and decisions they will face as adults, is an important part of education at the School. Personal, social and health education within the Learning for Life programme (LFL) is one

way in which these objectives are met. In addition to LFL sessions, pupils encounter further opportunities within the curriculum and through co-curricular activities, including assemblies, chapel talks, societies, study trips and many academic subjects. The School also supports significant pupil-led academic societies, including societies with a STEM focus and societies centered on the humanities, arts and wider intellectual life, as well as debating; these are run primarily by sixth formers and help foster intellectual curiosity across the wider school.

All pupils, including those in the Sixth Form, have weekly or fortnightly lessons in LFL. In the Sixth Form, these sessions take place with pupils' tutors; in Thirds to Fifth Form, the programme is delivered by a team of specialists. Each year group follows a scheme of work that builds on previous years and is tailored to pupils' stage of development. External speakers are used where appropriate. In addition to Learning for Life, pupils in the Sixth Form have a fortnightly lecture series covering university and careers guidance, as well as talks designed to stimulate or deepen interest in a wide range of areas.

Curriculum by Year

The school day is based on a two-week cycle with each day having six 50-minute lessons each day. In years Thirds to Fifth Form, pupils have a lesson provision of around 25 hours a week. The subject breakdown varies by year, as detailed separately below.

Third Form (Year 7)

The table below shows the number of 50-minute lessons per subject or activity over the two-week cycle, out of a total of 60 lessons.

English (6)	Maths (6)	Science (6)	ML 1 (4)	ML 2 (4)
Geography (3)	History (3)	PRE (3)	Drama (2)	Art (3)
Music (2)	Technology (3)	PE (3)	Games (4)	LFL (2)
Computer Science (2)	Enrichment (1)	Latin (3)		

Pupils are set broadly by ability in Maths. In other subjects, classes are mixed ability and set in common between subjects according to two clusters. One cluster is for English, Science, History, Geography, Philosophy, Religion and Ethics, Learning for Life and ICT where the average class size is 24. The other cluster is for Art, Drama, Music, Technology, and Modern Languages, where the average class size is 18. ML options are French, German and Spanish. Pupils choose one language and are then allocated a second.

Technology in the Third Form contains mainly of DT, with elements of Electronics. As well as timetabled lessons of Computer Science, ICT skills are also taught through the curriculum, and the Head of Computer Science works alongside departments to support their work.

Enrichment is taught in tutor groups by the Form Tutor and junior House staff. The forms are around 15 pupils in size, which allows the tutor to get to know them well and to support them effectively. The pupils meet their form tutor each morning at registration. Form tutors act as the first point of contact between home and school.

The PE curriculum also contains swimming lessons and special attention is given to weak or unconfident swimmers within the programme.

In addition to their core curriculum, pupils in the Thirds and Removes follow the BeingBancrofts programme - this incorporates enrichment and activities to bring meaningful breadth and stimulate intellectual curiosity to develop in our pupils the core skills to thrive as lifelong learners. This is bolstered by opportunities for service and volunteering, trips and visits, and sporting activities.

Removes (Year 8)

The table below shows the number of 50-minute lessons per subject or activity over the two-week cycle, out of a total of 60 lessons.

English (6)	Maths (6)	Science (6)	PRE (3)
ML 1 (4) *	Geography (3)	History (3)	Drama (2)
ML 2 (4) *	DT (2)	Music (2)	Art (3)
Latin (4)	Computing (2)	LFL (1)	P.E. (3)
	Games (4)	Enrichment (2)	

In the Removes, the classes continue to be mixed ability except for Maths. Classes are re-set from the Third Form to allow for new relationships to forge. ICT skills are taught through the curriculum, and the Head of Computer Science works alongside departments to support their work.

*Languages - pupils continue with the study of the two Modern Languages that they had chosen in the 3rds.

Design Technology in the Removes contains both practical DT, and some elements of Electronics.

The BeingBancroft's programme continues in the Removes and concludes with an awards ceremony at the end of the year.

Lower Fourth Form (Year 9)

In the Lower Fourth pupils make language choices and pick two creative and technical options as shown in the table below.

Core	English (6)	Maths (6)	Biology (4)	Chemistry (4)
	Physics (4)	Geography (4)	History (4)	PRE (4)
	PE (2)	Games (4)	LFL (2)	Enrichment (1)
Language Choices:				
Options	ML: (3) One to be chosen:	Classical: (3) One to be chosen from:	Mixed Block: (3) One to chosen from:	Creative and Technical: (3+3) Two to be chosen from:
	French German Spanish	Classics Latin Gratin	French German Spanish Classics Latin	Art Music DT Computer Programming Drama
		<i>(Classics has no language component and is not a necessary precursor to GCSE Classical Civilisation)</i>		

Except for Maths, classes continue to be mixed ability, with the option subjects grouped according to pupil choices. The Science lessons are now split into Physics, Chemistry and Biology, each having a specialist teacher.

Upper Fourth Form (Year 10)

The vast majority of pupils take 10 GCSE subjects at the end of year 11. Both English Literature and Language are compulsory to GCSE. The timetable is designed around the student choices, rather than choices confined to set option blocks. It is rare for there to be any pupils who cannot have their four option choices.

English, Physics, Chemistry and Biology continue to have largely mixed-ability groups.

Core	English (9)	Maths (7)	Biology (4)	Chemistry (4)
	Physics (4)	PE (2)	Games (4)	L.F.L (2)
GCSE Options	4 x (6)	Art		Music
		Classical Civilisation	French	Physical Education
		Classical Greek	Geography	
		Computer Science	German	Philosophy, Religion and Ethics
		Design Technology	History	
		Drama	Latin	Spanish

One option choice must normally be a modern language. However, pupils who choose both Classical Greek and Latin may meet the language requirement through those subjects and may choose three other subjects that do not include a modern language.

The top two sets for Maths are accelerated and take their GCSE at the end of the Upper-Fourth year.

GCSE class sizes are on average 20 in size, both in the core curriculum and optional curriculum. No option subject will have class sizes of more than 24 pupils, with the average for Creative and Technical Subjects being 18.

Fifth Form (Year 11)

The two accelerated Maths classes continue with Maths to a higher level in the Fifth Form, splitting into three classes to study Additional Maths, sitting the Free-Standing Maths Qualification (FSMQ) at the end of the year.

In the Fifth Form, a small number of pupils will move to a set focussed on preparing for Combined Science (Trilogy Award), although pupils are still taught separately by Biology, Chemistry and Physics specialists. The other science sets work towards three separate GCSEs.

In addition to the four periods per fortnight in the individual sciences, pupils also have two additional periods of Science Study. These take place in pupils' regular science groups and with two of their regular teachers. However, these periods predominantly focus on assessment, meaning that regular lesson time can be more productively used for active teaching and learning.

Core	English (8)	Maths (7)	Biology (4)	Chemistry (4)
	PE (2)	Games (4)	LFL (1)	Physics (4)
	Science Study (2)			
GCSE Options	4 x (6)	Art	French	Music
		Classical	Geography	Physical Education
		Civilisation	German	
		Classical	History	Philosophy, Religion and Ethics
		Greek	Latin	
		Computer Science		Spanish
		Design		
		Technology		
		Drama		

The PE course in the Fifth Form has a particular focus on health and fitness for life.

Sixth Form

Core	Lecture	Games		
	LFL	Life Skills/Enrichment		
Options	Art		Economics	Latin
	Biology		English Literature	Further Maths **
	Business		French	Single Maths
	Chemistry		Geography	Physics
	Classical Civilisation		German	Politics
	Design Technology		History *	Philosophy
	Drama		Psychology	Spanish
	EPQ			
	Computer Science			

*History pupils are given the option of studying either a Modern History course or a combined Modern and Early Modern History course.

** Further Maths (Maths & Further Maths A-levels) counts as two option choices. This is taught on 18 periods in the L6th and 20 in U6th.

Lower Sixth Form (Year 12)

As with GCSE options, the pupils choose their options first and then the timetable is designed to accommodate their options. This includes the options made by the 10 or so external pupils joining the sixth form.

Pupils may opt to start with 4 A-Levels or 3 A-Levels plus an EPQ. In the Lower Sixth, A level subjects are taught on 11 periods a fortnight. If a student chooses to do Further Maths (Maths & Further Maths), this counts as two subject choices but is taught over slightly fewer periods than two separate subjects. Pupils who choose Further Maths may choose two other courses.

As an alternative to an EPQ or fourth full A level, pupils have the option to pursue an AS in a language (modern or classical). Pupils are taught alongside those choosing to do a full A level in the language, with exams taken at the end of the Lower Sixth year.

Pupils have a fortnightly lecture series with visiting speakers coming into the school. Pupils considering medical-based degrees and careers, are timetabled into a fortnightly Medics Group where they find out more about these courses and careers as well as being given advice and support towards their applications.

The Learning for Life curriculum also continues with a focus on Sex and Relationships education.

In the Summer Term of the L6, pupils sit internal exams. The results of these exams, along with performance throughout the year inform the school's predicted grades for university applications.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Some pupils will opt to study an EPQ instead of a fourth subject. Pupils will learn how to conduct an extended piece of research, then develop it into a project of their choosing. The aim is for pupils to learn independent working, project management, critical thinking and analytical skills, while applying them to a topic of their interest.

The EPQ presents a unique opportunity for the student to choose a subject of study, then develop a project to suit those interests. There is a focus on research and presentation skills, which pupils will get to use whilst working. This is good preparation for university and professional work, when independent working and the ability to develop a plan and manage its completion will be essential.

Upper Sixth Form (Year 13)

The majority of pupils continue into the Upper Sixth year with three A Levels and the lesson allocation, per subject, increases to 12 sessions a fortnight. They will then also continue with the lecture programme and Learning for Life programmes begun in the Lower Sixth. Particular time and focus is given to preparation of university applications and interviews etc. The Games programme continues as well.

Pupils will also have a fortnightly Assessment Period in each of their subjects. This supervised period is used for assessment or timed homework, meaning that lesson time can be freed up to be used for teaching and learning.

Academic Monitoring, Support and Guidance

Baselines and Target Grades

When pupils join the school, they undergo a screening test for literacy-based learning issues, with cases followed up as required. Pupils also sit the MidYIS test in Year 7 and again in Year 9. For pupils in the Thirds, Removes and Lower Fourth, MidYIS results are used, alongside other available information, to provide a baseline known internally as a band. There are six bands, with Band 1 being the highest and Band 6 the lowest; these correspond to the grades awarded in these years, allowing teachers to compare the attainment grades they give with each pupil's baseline. The banding structure is internal and is not shared with parents.

For pupils moving into the Upper Fourth and Fifth Form, the results of the Year 9 MidYIS test are used to help generate target grades. These target grades are agreed with heads of department and are based on the distribution of MidYIS outcomes, with an expected Bancroft's value-added element applied so that they align with the School's overall academic targets.

Pupils in the Lower Sixth also receive target grades. These are generated in the autumn term, evaluated at the end of that term and then issued at the start of the spring term.

Parents are made aware of target grades so that pupils, parents and the School have a shared understanding of expected progress at GCSE and A-level.

In general, each pupil has a grading point each half term. This may be based on a mock examination, another internal assessment or, more commonly, the teacher's assessment of the pupil's ongoing performance. Half-termly grades normally include both an attainment grade and an attitude to learning grade, providing regular information about pupils' academic progress and approach to learning.

Academic Intervention and Supervised Study

Academic tracking is overseen by the Deputy Head Academic, supported by the Academic Office team, to identify pupils who may be underperforming and require support. In the first instance, intervention is normally discussed between the tutor and the pupil. Where further support is needed, this dialogue involves the pupil's housemaster or housemistress, with targets set and followed up as appropriate. If concerns persist, the Deputy Head Academic becomes more directly involved. In the Sixth Form, the Head of Sixth Form plays a significant role in academic intervention and works closely with the Deputy Head Academic, housemasters and housemistresses.

Some pupils are supported through supervised study, an after-school session designed to provide structure and targeted academic support. Pupils may be identified for supervised study through the School's tracking system, including where their attainment is below, or not sufficiently close to, their allocated band or target grade. Heads of Department are involved in providing suitable work for pupils attending supervised study so that the support is appropriately focused. There is also a system of daily report cards for pupils who would temporarily benefit from a narrower focus and more immediate feedback.

Learning Support and Access Arrangements

The Learning Support department works with pupils who have an identified learning difference, or who may benefit from extra support, even where a learning difference has not been formally identified. Individual Plans are drawn up for pupils on the learning support register. The department offers drop-in times for any pupil in the school, while pupils with identified learning differences in Years 7 to 11 may be withdrawn from one lesson each week or fortnight for more individual support; the subject from which a pupil is withdrawn varies throughout the year. In the Sixth Form, support is given during a study period. The Learning Support department also works closely with the Examinations Officer on access arrangements, helping pupils with learning differences understand and use appropriate support in examinations.

Co-curricular and Super-curricular Opportunities

Departments run sessions to provide curricular support where needed, including exam-focused support for pupils in examination years. Departments also offer a range of subject-based co-curricular and super-curricular clubs, which sit alongside, but are distinct from, the larger sixth-form-led academic societies mentioned above. These departmental clubs give pupils further opportunities to take up leadership roles, enter competitions, extend their understanding, engage in meaningful debate and explore applications of their knowledge beyond the classroom.

Futures and University Guidance

Guidance about future pathways is provided through the Futures department and is also embedded within the LFL programme. Pupils receive additional support through Higher Education and Futures evenings, tutors, heads of year, house staff and the Head of Pupil Potential, as appropriate. Information evenings for GCSE and A-level options are held, and pupils in Year 10 are offered the opportunity to take the Morrisby careers test and associated interview. Each pupil has an individual interview with their housemaster or housemistress in the run-up to choosing GCSE or A-level options, with tutors providing further advice. In the Sixth Form, pupils receive guidance on the UCAS process, including through information evenings and talks within the Lower Sixth lecture series. As part of their preparation for university applications, pupils are offered the opportunity to have practice interviews. Assistance is also given to pupils who would like to undertake work experience in the Fifth or Sixth Form, including summer placements.

Competitive University Applications

Provision for pupils applying to Oxford, Cambridge, medicine, veterinary science and other highly competitive university courses is coordinated separately. Potential applicants are identified and monitored closely from early in the Lower Sixth, with regular dialogue between the School, pupils and parents about the demands of these applications and the preparation required. Pupils on the Oxbridge programme, and other pupils applying for competitive courses, have access to substantial online preparation materials for university admissions tests. Mock examinations and further preparation are also provided where appropriate, supporting pupils as they prepare for admissions tests, interviews and the wider demands of competitive university applications.

Homework and Marking

Pupils' work should be assessed regularly and thoroughly, and this information should be used to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress. This assessment will include, but need not be limited to, the marking of homework.

Members of staff should ensure that any task set can reasonably be completed within the time allocation in the homework timetable for that year group. For more open-ended tasks, clear guidance should be given so that pupils understand how much time they are expected to spend.

Homework should be set clearly and also recorded as an assignment on Microsoft Teams. Members of staff are encouraged not to wait until the end of the lesson to set homework, as this can be chaotic and can make the task seem like an afterthought. It can often be effective to introduce homework at the beginning of the lesson.

Homework should be collected at the first reasonable opportunity after it is set. Members of staff may not set work and expect it to be completed by the next calendar day, even if a timetabled lesson takes place then. In the vast majority of cases, the homework timetable is written to avoid this.

For the Thirds to Lower Fourths, extra homework or extended tasks are not set for any school holiday.

Thirds to Fifth Form

Homework should only be set on slots shown in the homework timetables. For the junior years (Thirds to Lower Fourth), the setting of homework in every slot is not mandatory.

Sixth Form

There is no published timetable, but subjects should generally set the equivalent of about 4 hours of work per week for the average pupil. The setting of work should be co-ordinated for groups which are shared between two or more teachers so that pupils are not put under unreasonable pressure. Deadlines for work should be set so as to allow pupils to plan their work and how it fits with their extra-curricular involvement.

Marking and Feedback

Departments have their own Marking Policies, as outlined in Department Handbooks. It is the policy of the school that for all year groups the work from pupils should be collected regularly and be marked promptly and returned to the pupil as soon as is reasonably possible - generally within a week. Pupils should be given constructive feedback where appropriate, in a way which is clear and can understood by the pupils.

Grades or marks do not necessarily need to be put on work which is returned to pupils, in fact members of staff are recommended to consider if comment-only marking would be more appropriate for the task. In any case, it is expected that records are kept of homework effort and achievement in mark books, to monitor progress and give supporting evidence to half-termly grades or reports.

Heads of Department should ensure that new teachers to the school understand the expectations of work-setting and marking at Bancroft's and they should monitor the practice of the new member of staff, particularly during their first term.

Homework Loadings by Year

Year	Average Loading
3rd form (year 7)	4 hours per week
Removes (year 8)	4.5 hours per week
L4th (year 9)	6.75 hours per week
U4th & 5 th (years 10 and 11)	9 hours per week
6th form (years 12 and 13)	4 hours per A-level per week

Grading, Reporting, and Parents' Evenings

Grades or reports are sent home at regular intervals: grades normally each half term and a full report once a year. Parents' Evenings complement the written reports so that the parents receive either written or oral feedback at least twice a year. Most year groups have two parents' evenings per year, with one being online and the other being in-person.

The purpose of a report is to encourage further progress by taking stock, as precisely as possible, of what has gone well and what has gone badly. Reports should demonstrate that the member of staff knows that child and what their individual strengths and weaknesses are. Reports should be fair and avoid excessive criticism or praise. It is important that advice for the future deals with specific points, e.g. learning material, use of paragraphs, listening to instructions for practical work, reading exam questions carefully, etc.

Attitude to Learning Grades

Grades are awarded on a "best fit" basis: students do not need to meet every criterion to receive a grade but are assessed according to the description that best reflects their typical approach to learning.

EXCEPTIONAL

Resilience is highly developed and challenges are actively embraced.

Responsibility for learning is firmly embedded, with clear ownership and consistently reflective attitudes.

Feedback is carefully considered and consistently acted upon to secure improvement.

Engagement in lessons is sharply focussed and consistently thoughtful; appropriate questions are asked and, where necessary, answers challenged, well-developed responses are offered, and collaboration is notably successful.

Expectations are consistently exceeded.

Organisation is exemplary; materials, time, and tasks are managed independently with precision and consistency.

STRONG

Resilience is well demonstrated; challenges are approached with confidence.

Responsibility for learning is secure and independence is clearly developing.

Feedback is considered and usually acted upon to improve.

Engagement in lessons is focussed and thoughtful; appropriate questions are asked, considered responses are offered, and collaboration is effective.

Expectations are consistently met.

Organisation is effective; materials and time are managed well, and tasks are generally completed independently.

GOOD

Resilience is usually shown; challenges are generally approached positively.

Responsibility for learning is developing and most tasks are approached with appropriate commitment.

Feedback is acknowledged and sometimes acted upon.

Engagement in lessons is generally positive; relevant questions may be asked, responses are offered when prompted, and collaboration is appropriate.

Expectations are met with minor inconsistency.

Organisation is adequate; materials and time are usually managed, though some prompting may be needed.

INCONSISTENT

Resilience is variable; challenges may sometimes be avoided.

Responsibility for learning is inconsistent and independence is not yet secure.

Feedback is not consistently reflected upon or acted upon.

Engagement in lessons can be passive; questions are rarely asked, responses may lack development, and collaboration may be uneven.

Expectations are met irregularly.

Organisation is variable; materials or tasks are sometimes mismanaged and deadlines may be missed.

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Resilience is weak; challenges are frequently avoided.

Responsibility for learning is limited and there is little independent application.

Feedback is rarely acted upon.

Engagement in lessons is low and may at times disrupt the learning of others; questions are seldom asked, responses are minimal, and collaboration is ineffective.

Expectations are not being met.

Organisation is weak; materials, time, and tasks are frequently disorganised, leading to missed deadlines.

Attainment Grades

Where a half-termly grading point is not based on a mock examination or other internal assessment, as is more often the case, teachers award an attainment grade based on their professional judgement of the pupil's current performance.

Grades in all years are cumulative. This means that an attainment grade should reflect the pupil's secure understanding, knowledge and skills across the relevant course or key stage, rather than only the most recent piece of work. Where earlier gaps in learning remain significant, they should be reflected in the grade awarded.

A pupil's grade may rise where there is clear evidence that earlier gaps have been addressed, either through improved mastery of previous material or through later learning that demonstrates secure understanding. Grades should therefore recognise genuine progress while still remaining an honest reflection of cumulative attainment.

Thirds, Removes and L4th

Grades indicate a pupil's current level of attainment against the KS3 descriptors. They help the School track progress in relation to baseline ability and provide clear, meaningful information to parents and carers about academic development.

Awarded grades should be aligned with a 5% tolerance of prescribed quotas. These quotas apply across cohorts, rather than to individual teaching groups. Heads of department are responsible for ensuring that the overall distribution of grades is broadly consistent with these quotas, whether through whole-cohort assessment, ranking and discussion of borderline cases, or descriptor-led judgement checked against the expected distribution.

Quantitative evidence from summative assessment should form the core basis for awarding grades, supported by teachers' professional judgement. Grades should not be influenced by optimism, reassurance or retrospective expectations; they must remain an honest reflection of current cumulative attainment.

The grade descriptors are set out below, with the indicative quota for each band shown in brackets. The descriptors are made available to parents, while the italicised teacher guidance is internal and is provided to support consistency in the awarding of grades.

Band 1: Exceptional (about 7%)

Descriptor: Understanding shows depth and assurance, with knowledge applied independently and insightfully, including in novel or complex contexts. Reasoning is sophisticated, sustained, and perceptive, and responses demonstrate discriminating judgement. Communication is consistently fluent and assured.

Teacher guidance: Within this cohort, attainment at this level represents the most advanced standard of performance. On this trajectory, a GCSE equivalent of 9 is almost certain and the student is showing early signs of potential for entrance to the most competitive courses at the most competitive universities.

Band 2: Advanced (usually about 30% of the cohort)

Descriptor: Understanding is very secure, with knowledge applied fluently and flexibly across a wide range of contexts. Reasoning is sustained and coherent, with frequent evidence of analysis and effective evaluation. Communication is precise, well controlled, and often shows insight.

Teacher guidance: Within this cohort, attainment at this level places the student among the strongest performers. On this trajectory, a GCSE equivalent of ~ 9 is a likely outcome.

Band 3: Strong (usually about 25% of the cohort)

Descriptor: Understanding is thorough, with knowledge applied consistently and effectively, including in more complex contexts. Reasoning is well structured and developed, and responses show clear analysis. Communication is accurate and increasingly fluent, with growing control over subject-specific language.

Teacher guidance: Within this cohort, attainment at this level indicates performance that is clearly strong. On this trajectory, a GCSE equivalent of between 8 and 9 might be expected.

Band 4: Secure (usually about 25% of the cohort)

Descriptor: Understanding of key content is reliable, and knowledge is applied confidently in familiar contexts and increasingly in unfamiliar ones. Reasoning is logical and usually developed, with explanations that are clear and relevant. Communication is generally well organised, though evaluative elements are not consistently sustained.

Teacher guidance: Within this cohort, this level represents secure attainment and a sound standard of performance. On this trajectory, a GCSE equivalent of between 7 and 8 might be expected.

Band 5: Developing (usually about 10% of the cohort)

Descriptor: Understanding is generally secure across much of the subject, with knowledge applied accurately in familiar contexts and, at times, in less familiar situations. Reasoning is usually clear, though depth and precision vary, and explanations are not always fully developed. Communication is organised but may lack fluency or sustained development.

Teacher guidance: Within this cohort, attainment at this level represents work that shows developing security but does not yet demonstrate consistent depth. On this trajectory, a GCSE equivalent of ~ 7 might be expected. Pursuing an A-level in this subject would be unlikely to result in a strong grade.

Band 6: Foundation (usually about 3 % of the cohort)

Descriptor: Understanding of core content is evident and can be applied in familiar and straightforward contexts. Reasoning and explanation are present but tend to be brief, with security decreasing as tasks become more complex or require greater independence. Communication is generally clear enough to convey meaning, though precision and depth are variable.

Teacher guidance: Within this cohort, attainment at this level is below what would typically be expected for students, placing the student among a minority whose work currently demonstrates a more limited range of application and development. On this trajectory, a GCSE equivalent of < 7 might be expected and A-level would not be a viable option.

Upper Fourth, Fifths and Sixth Form

Grades indicate a student's current level of attainment and help the School track progress in relation to baseline ability or target grade. They also provide clear, meaningful information to parents about academic development.

At Upper Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Form, attainment grades should reflect the standards defined by the relevant examination boards, taking account of the point the student has reached in the course. These grades are awarded in line with the relevant qualification scale: 9–1 where students are working towards GCSEs, and A*–E where students are working towards A-levels. They are not a mark for the most recent assessment alone, nor a prediction based on hoped-for future improvement. Rather, they represent a professional judgement about the standard the student is currently demonstrating and the likely outcome if that standard is maintained.

Quantitative evidence from summative assessment should provide the core basis for awarding grades, supported by teachers' professional judgement. Grades should not be inflated for optimism, reassurance, anticipated improvement, or concern about how they may be received; they must remain an honest, consistent and evidence-based reflection of current attainment.

Quality Assurance and Academic Standards

Monitoring by Heads of Departments

Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring and ensuring that the teaching and learning in their department are of a good standard across all years and abilities. To assure themselves that this is the case, it is expected that they will monitor student progress and monitor and support the teachers within their department. Methods will include regular observations, work scrutiny, and departmental discussions. Heads of Department review the staff within their departments, sharing this responsibility in larger departments with other senior department leaders. Within this review process, targets are set and monitored in order to develop the capabilities of staff and enable the school to progress.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the core principle whereby pupils behave in an ethical manner and others can have trust and confidence in them as individuals. It is the cornerstone for the production of honest and authentic work that genuinely reflects the endeavours of the creator of that work.

There are a number of reasons why it is important to engender a culture of academic integrity within a school:

To ensure fairness – assessments can only be fair if they provide an accurate reflection of pupils' achievements. Any action that gives a pupil an advantage, disadvantages those who have produced their work ethically and without resort to malpractice.

To more effectively support pupils – a crucial function of assessment is to inform teaching staff as to where a pupil may need additional support. Any malpractice that masks difficulties, makes it far more difficult for members of staff to diagnose problems and then address them. This ultimately harms the pupil who has engaged in malpractice.

To support a desire to reduce anxiety around assessment – we are aware that assessed work can be a considerable source of anxiety among our pupils – this can then lead pupils to behave in a way that undermines trust in homework and assessments. By promoting academic integrity we will support the message that, while some stress can be a useful motivator and supporter of high achievement, over-anxiety is unhealthy, and honest and credible work is a vital stepping stone to academic success.

To ensure trust within the community – in order to support positive relationships between all members of the community, it is important that staff can trust and have confidence in the work that pupils produce, and that pupils don't feel that their peers might gain an unfair advantage by producing work that has been unethically produced.

To develop the values that we would wish to promote among our pupils – any school's mission will involve ensuring that it develops pupils who are equipped for the

challenges that lie ahead and that they have values and exhibit behaviours that make them contributing members of society and role models for others. This will include demonstrating honesty and reliability.

The School promotes academic integrity through clear expectations, education about plagiarism and the dishonest use of technology, and appropriate safeguards in assessment. These safeguards may include vigilance during in-class tests and the use of tools such as AI-detection software where appropriate. Detailed guidance for staff is provided through the Academic Office.