

CURRICULUM POLICY

Senior School

This document contains the following:

- an introduction to the academic philosophy of the school
- an explanation of how we meet the regulatory requirements for the quality of education provided (curriculum)
- an outline of the structure of the whole foundation (Pre-Preparatory School, Junior School and Senior School)
- an outline of the Senior School curriculum at KS3
- an outline of the Senior School curriculum at KS4
- an outline of the Senior School curriculum in the Sixth Form
- notes on the wider curriculum in the Senior School, covering sport and games, information technology, religious education, higher education and careers advice, PSHE, and extra-curricular activities
- an explanation of our vision for broadening the curriculum

This document should be read in conjunction with the following complementary documents:

- Homework, assessment and reporting policy (DCSF Standard I. (3) (a), (b), (g); (4))
- Learning support policy (DCSF Standard I. (2) (b), (e), (i))
- PSHE syllabus (DCSF Standard I. (2) (f))
- Higher education and careers advice (DCSF Standard I. (2) (g))

1. Introduction. The curriculum policy of the three constituent parts of the Foundation is as stated in the current prospectus. Our vision is that our pupils should grow up to be independent learners who are able to explore their thinking within a curriculum which is relevant, engaging and scholarly. Pupils study a wide range of academic subjects up to Year 9. They develop and perfect key intellectual skills in a broad cultural and historical context, so that they can make sense of their learning as a coherent whole. While we want pupils to know things, we also encourage them to weigh the evidence and to be critical of what they hear, see and read. We take account of the ability of every pupil and ensure that each is challenged and her or his talents fostered. From year 7, a formal enrichment programme provides extra opportunities for the most academically able to explore complex issues in greater depth. When pupils leave Highgate, we want them to be knowledgeable and informed young people who have the skills to sustain a life-long love of learning.

2. Meeting the Regulatory Requirements for the Quality of Education Provided (Curriculum). Full details are available in Schemes of Work: from yy7 upwards, these take the form of departmental schemes produced by Head of Department and coordinated by the Director of Studies.

a) All pupils of compulsory school age attend school full-time. By maintaining a very broad range of subjects until year 9 and having a policy of pupils taking nine or ten subjects to GCSE, the breadth of the educational experience is maintained for as long as possible. To foster linguistic skills, all pupils take GCSEs in English Language and Literature and at least one modern language, while between 40-45% take GCSE in Latin. All pupils take GCSE in Mathematics and Science (either Combined as two GCSE awards or as three separate sciences). Design Technology is compulsory to KS3, as are human, social, aesthetic and

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creative subjects (History, Geography, Art, Music and Drama). All the subjects mentioned (apart from Drama) are available as GCSEs (and Drama is available again at KS5). Physical Education is provided for in PE lessons up to and including year 10, and all pupils in every year have weekly Games lessons. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (a))

b) Relevant Heads or Heads of Department ensure that the content of the courses is suitable for each year group. Syllabuses are created and followed as far as KS3 and appropriate GCSE, AS and A2 syllabuses are chosen thereafter. Heed is taken of aspects of gender, race and religion when formulating and choosing syllabuses; schemes of work and lesson plans make provision for differentiation in accordance with the aptitudes of pupils. (DCSF Standard 1.(2) (b))

c) Pupils are assessed in literacy and numeracy by appropriate work set in each year and by formal examinations and tests. Pupil participation in class at every level ensures that high standards of speaking and listening are maintained, the latter also tested by written work and formal examinations. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (c))

d) Lessons are conducted in English; where English is not the pupils' first language, we are satisfied at the point of entry that the pupil is able to cope with the teaching provided. When the pupil simply needs help in bettering his/her fluency and understanding, special arrangements are made through the Learning Support Coordinator. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (d))

e) We are currently dealing with two pupils with a statement. Their needs are coordinated by the Learning Support Coordinator and SENCO who ensures that statutory requirements and individual needs are met. The policy is laid out in full in a separate document. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (e))

f) The Christian ethos of the school sets the standards for personal and social education. Such issues are dealt with specifically in assemblies and also in Religious Education classes which are compulsory to y11 (there is in addition RS GCSE and AL). Many issues are also raised and discussed in other subjects and are highlighted in schemes of work (eg stemming from English Literature, or from ethical issues in Geography and Science, for example). Health education matters are dealt with by tutors in years 7 and 8 and by a formal programme run by the Head of the Middle School in years 9 to 11, aided by experts in particular areas from both inside and outside the school (see separate syllabus). In the Sixth Form, there is no formal programme, but issues are dealt with in academic subjects as they arise, but also in tutor meetings, general studies lectures and in assemblies. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (f))

g) Careers guidance is provided from y10 by a team led by the Senior Careers Teacher, aided by visiting experts from ISCO (see below). (DCSF Standard 1 (2) (g))

h) Full schemes of work are in place for pupils under 5 (see Pre-prep documentation) and a full A Level programme is available for pupils between the ages of 16 to 18. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (h))

i) The academic programme is open to all pupils. We aim to create a safe environment where all are stimulated to learn and to pursue both a full general programme of education and their own specific interests. There are no barriers to any pupil taking any subject, other than when professional advice suggests that a particular GCSE or AL would be inappropriate for a particular pupil's ability. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (i))

j) The breadth of the curriculum allows pupils to have experience of many issues which they will face in adult life. Moreover, appropriate careers and higher education advice is provided. Societies provide other stimuli, whether in the form of visiting speakers on topics such as politics/economics/gap year opportunities etc, or activities such as community service, young enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme or Urban Survival. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (j))

3. The structure of the School and its Curriculum

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3.1 The structure of the school and its three sections is set out below. Regular meetings between the Heads of the three schools, between the Directors of Studies and between Heads of Department and other teachers enable curriculum coherence and provide for a curriculum change and development.

Age	NC year	Key Stage					
3-4	Nursery	Foundation	Pre-Preparatory School				
4-5	Reception						
5-6	1	KS 1					
6-7	2						
7-8	3	KS 2					Junior School
8-9	4						
9-10	5						
10-11	6						
11-12	7	KS 3			Senior School		
12-13	8						
13-14	9						
14-15	10	KS 4					
15-16	11						
16-17	12	KS 5					
17-18	13						

3.2 Senior School: Years 7, 8 and 9 (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (a), (b), (c), (i), (j))

The curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 is designed to give pupils further experience of a wide range of subjects, not only to provide knowledge and to develop critical thinking skills but also to ensure that they can make informed choices about which subjects to continue to GCSE.

All pupils in each of the years study English, Mathematics, Design Technology, French, Geography, History, Art, Music, Drama, Information Technology and Religious Education. In Y7, Coordinated Science is taught (one teacher covering all three sciences and concentrating on establishing scientific method), while Biology, Physics and Chemistry are taught separately in Years 8 and 9.

Pupils are taught Latin in Years 7 and 8. Unless they join the school in Year 9 with no Latin, or it is clear that they have reached their ceiling in this subject, they also take Latin in Year 9; otherwise they may take Classical Civilisation in Year 9.

In Year 9, pupils must opt for either a second modern foreign language (Spanish, German, or Russian) or for Classical Greek. In Year 8 in 2009-10, Chinese Mandarin will be studied in Year 8, the time being taken from other subjects on a rolling basis over a ten week period per class, giving a maximum of thirty sessions. It is envisaged that Mandarin will be on offer as one of the extra modern foreign language choices in Year 9 in 2010.

Each year group has a Games afternoon each week.

Year 9 has one period per fortnight of Linguistics taught by the Head Master.

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In addition to tutorial time before school and in the long morning break, each class has a fortnightly tutorial period in the timetable for PHSE and academic monitoring. (DCSF Standard I. (2) (f))

The figures below refer to the numbers of 50-minute lessons allocated in a fortnightly cycle (in Year 9, Art and DT are taught on a carousel, one at a time for half the year on 4ppf).

Subject	Period Allocation			Subject	Period Allocation		
	Y7	Y8	Y9		Y7	Y8	Y9
English	8	7	6	Design Technology	3	3	2
Mathematics	7	7	7	Art	3	3	2
General Science	8			Music	2	2	2
Biology		3	4	Drama	2	2	1
Chemistry		3	4	Information Technology	2	2	1
Physics		3	4	Latin/ Classical Civilisation	4	4	4
French	4	4	4	Spanish/German/ Russian/Classical Greek			4
History	3	3	3	Physical Education	4	4	2
Geography	3	3	3	Games	4	4	4
Religious Education	2	2	1	Tutorial	1	1	1
				Linguistics			1

3.3 Senior School: Years 10 and 11 (to GCSE) (DCSF Standard I. (2) (a), (b), (c), (i), (j))

The GCSE curriculum core consists of:

- English Language
- English Literature
- Mathematics
- A modern foreign language
- Science. Pupils take the same course in Year 10 and all sit the Core Science GCSE. Depending on their Core results and their aptitude, they are re-setted; the four top sets take three separate sciences to gain three GCSEs in Physics, Chemistry and Biology, while the four lower sets take Additional Science and gain two GCSEs (ie Core and Additional Science)

In addition, pupils take three other subjects. While guidance is given over the formation of a sensible set of subjects and university/career implications are discussed (DCSF Standard I. (2) (g)), there is no other compulsion on pupils as regards these further choices. In other words, they may choose any three from History, Geography, Religious Studies, Art, Music, Design Technology, Latin, Greek, Classical Civilisation (pupils may start this subject *ab initio* in Year 10); in addition to the modern language taken as a core subject, pupils may take a second modern language, the languages on offer being French, German, Spanish and Russian. Pupils make their choices and the blocking system is drawn up to accommodate the first choices of as many pupils as possible (in most years, only one or two out of c130 do not get their first choice set of subjects).

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In addition to the GCSE subjects, all pupils take Information Technology in Year 10, with a view to completing the European Computer Driving Licence by the end of that year. All pupils have Religious Education, whether or not they are taking Religious Studies GCSE. All pupils have a Games afternoon weekly; Year 10 pupils have Physical Education fortnightly. All pupils, in addition to the tutorial time before school and in the long morning break, have a fortnightly tutorial within the timetable for PHSE, careers education and academic monitoring. (DCSF Standard I. (2) (f))

The allocation of subjects is indicated in the table below (figures are the number of periods if 50 minutes in a fortnightly cycle, non-GCSE time in italics).

Subject	Period Allocation		Subject	Period Allocation	
	Year 10	Year 11		Year 10	Year 11
English	8	8	Design Technology	6	6
Mathematics	7	7	Latin	6	6
Physics	4	5	Classical Civilisation	6	6
Chemistry	4	5	Greek	6	6
Biology	4	5	Spanish	6	6
French	6	6	German	6	6
History	6	6	Russian	6	6
Geography	6	6	<i>Information Technology</i>	1	
Religious Studies	6	6	<i>Religious Education</i>	1	1
Art	6	6	<i>Physical Education</i>	2	
Music	6	6	Games	4	4
			<i>Tutorial</i>	1	1

3.4. Senior School: Years 12 and 13 (DCSF Standard I. (2) (a), (b), (c), (h), (i), (j))

Pupils in the Sixth Form take four AS subjects in Year 12; about 20% take four to A2, the rest reducing to three A2 subjects. All pupils who can do so reasonably are encouraged to take four subjects. The choice is made from four option blocks; often the blocking can be altered to accommodate pupils whose first choice is not available on the basic blocking structure.

We deliberately do not offer five AS subjects; we believe that time should be spent thinking about subjects and reading from prescribed lists and beyond the syllabus. At this level, it is our policy to encourage depth and academic rigour. It is recognised that some pupils can achieve this at the same time as doing five subjects. Some measures are in place to provide off-timetable classes (eg in Chemistry, French and Latin in recent years) when two or three very able pupils are keen to do a fifth subject: one or two lessons are arranged per week to impart the basic material and the pupils follow up the reading and learning on their own, doing all the written work expected of a full AL pupil. In addition, able scientists often take Maths, Further Maths and Physics, three subjects on two blocks (Maths releasing certain agreed periods to allow pupils to attend half the AL Physics lessons where new work is being introduced).

The qualification to take a subject to AS is an A grade at GCSE: this is set as the target. We do make exceptions, except in Mathematics where it is evident that a pupil gaining less than

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A is very likely to get no more than a C at AL. An A grade in specified related subjects is required for subjects not taken at GCSE Level (eg an A in Maths for AL Economics).

The subjects currently on offer (24) in the Sixth Form are:

- English Literature
- History; Government and Politics
- Latin; Greek; Classical Civilisation
- French; Spanish; German; Russian
- Economics; Geography; Philosophy; Religious Studies
- Art; History of Art; Music; Theatre Studies; Design Technology
- Mathematics; Further Mathematics
- Physics, Chemistry; Biology

In Year 12, eleven periods are normally taught of the twelve available on the block. Some subjects (eg History of Art choose to use all twelve because of the volume of material on the syllabus). All departments utilise the twelve periods at A2 in Year 13, except if the set (eg in Greek) is small and made up of very able pupils (when the lessons may be reduced to nine or ten).

In addition, Sixth Formers have:

- One tutorial per fortnight in the timetable, in addition to tutorial time at the start of the day and in the long morning break, for academic monitoring, careers and higher education advice and for PHSE matters (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (f), (g), (j))
- Two Games periods (ie one afternoon) per week
- One General Studies lecture per fortnight (members of staff or visiting speakers talk on a variety of academic and cultural themes); the Head of English is also the Director of Cultural Learning and is responsible, with the Director of Studies, for drawing up a coherent programme over two years (DCSF Standard 1. 2 (a), (b), (f), (h), (j))

A Sixth Former therefore has, in Year 12 a total of fifty out of sixty contact periods per fortnight (44 AL lessons, 4 Games, one Tutorial and one General Studies); a pupil keeping four A2 subjects will have 54 contact periods, while the majority studying three subjects will have 42 contact periods.

3.5 The Wider Curriculum in the Senior School

- a) Sport and Games.** Physical Education is taught up to Year 10. All year groups have Games weekly. A rich variety of sports are on offer; those naturally interested in sport are encouraged and fostered to develop their talents to a high level. On the other hand, it is recognised that not all are natural sportsmen/women and some pupils have an aversion to sport. We are committed to encouraging physical fitness and provide a full range of activities, so that each pupil at every level can find something to his/her liking and so develop physical fitness and the ability to be part of a team and to work together. Competition is encouraged and excellence in team and individual sports, as in other areas of school life, is nurtured and very much valued. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (a), (f), (h))
- b) Information Technology.** All pupils have formal lessons in Information Technology to the end of Year 10 (to the end of Year 9 from 2010). It is our belief that ICT is a tool and an essential one at that; but we also think that it should be practised throughout a pupil's range of subjects and not taught to, say, GCSE as an end in itself.

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The ECDL course appears to provide the best all-round preparation and to be very practical. All pupils are to be encouraged, though not forced, to take the qualification by the end of Year 9. The Head of Information Technology reviews the use of and provision for ICT in the various subjects to ensure that pupils beyond Year 9 are using and developing their skills to an appropriate level and in preparation for university and the workplace. More formal opportunities are currently being planned to enable pupils from Year 10 upwards to have access to specialist extra-curricular help in the ICT rooms and to foster those pupils for whom ICT is a passion. Each department's Scheme of Work should have a general statement about the use of ICT within that department and should indicate where specific skills are being required and practised in particular tasks. (DCSF Standard I. (2) (a), (b), (c), (h), (j))

- c) Religious Education.** Whether or not a pupil chooses to take Religious Studies to GCSE, all pupils have Religious Education classes till Year 11. Highgate has a Christian heritage, while welcoming those of all faiths or none, and the ethos of the school relies heavily on Christian ethics (see separate document on *Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development*). Religious education serves to open all pupils' eyes to the spiritual dimension in their own and others' lives. It matters to us that our pupils are equipped to live a moral life informed by choices and values and are helped to navigate their way through uncertain and unchanging times. Pupils learn about and discuss moral and ethical issues and study comparative religion, making them aware of the beliefs of others by whom they are surrounded in North London. There is no formal RE in the Sixth Form, but all pupils attend a religious service weekly where they hear about religious and moral issues. General Studies lectures regularly contain related matter, as do society meetings such as the Philosophy Society. Heads of Department will soon identify areas of a religious, moral or ethical nature in their subject Schemes of Work. (DCSF Standard I. (2) (f), (j))
- d) Higher Education and Careers.** The Head of Careers is responsible for delivering Careers Education in the tutorial programme in Years 9 to 11; thereafter such advice is given on request to an individual. He encourages work experience and work shadowing, organises careers evenings and other visits from experts in their field and from former pupils who have recently taken up a particular career. He runs the ISCO careers aptitude tests. Through housemasters he will give career-based advice to pupils in Year 9 choosing GCSEs, while the Director of Studies is responsible for providing advice on purely academic matters. The giving of GCSE choice advice is the responsibility of the Housemaster, who, as Year 9 tutor, delivers such advice in tutorial time. The Director of Studies supports the Year 11 tutors in giving advice about choosing A Levels; again, the Year 11 tutors will deliver this advice in tutorial time. The Assistant to the Head of Sixth Form is in charge of providing advice on higher education in tutorial time and in special lunch-time and after-school sessions; she organises a Universities' Fair in May. The Assistant to the Director of Studies takes responsibility for pupils applying to Oxford and Cambridge and there is a designated member of staff who specialises in American universities. Separate documents outline specifically what is provided in terms of career, higher education and Oxbridge advice. (DCSF Standard I. (2) (g), (j))
- e) Personal and Social Education.** All three parts of the Foundation follow carefully structured programmes of personal and social education. The specific topics are delivered by a variety of means: formal lessons, tutorial periods, assemblies etc. A separate PHSE document spells out the content; in the Senior School, this area is the responsibility of the Head of the Upper School (Years 9-11). (DCSF Standard I. (2) (f), (j))
- f) Extra-curricular activities.** A wide range of extra-curricular activities is on offer and is listed in a separate document. All pupils in Years 7 and 8 choose an activity to

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pursue during the lunch hour on Tuesdays. Some activities have an academic base, some are more practical and artistic. All pupils must also take part in a Tuesday Afternoon Activity at 4.15 on Tuesdays, from the January of Year 9 to the January of Year 11; they are encouraged to pursue a TAA in the Sixth Form too. The specific provision of the aforementioned activities is tailored to the age of the pupils concerned, and care is taken to ensure that there are activities to suit both boys and girls. There are also many department/subject-based societies, as well as many other societies begun and run by pupils which are open to all members of the school, at least from Year 9 upwards. All pupils are encouraged to attend these and to take part in them. At every level we encourage pupils to take up a musical instrument and to take part in the many orchestras, choirs and ensembles. There is a school play at least once a term; many are organised and produced by senior pupils themselves, and involvement in drama is also encouraged at every level. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (a), (b), (c), (f), (h), (i), (j))

3.6 Broadening the curriculum

A major initiative is the implementation from 2009 of the Knowledge Curriculum. Concerned about the narrowness of public examination syllabuses, we have identified areas of study which most, if not all, pupils do not cover in the official departmental syllabuses as they stand. A topic is prescribed for the year (a theme in years 7 to 10 and a historical period in Years 11 to 13). The centre-piece of the delivery is three study days (one may take the form of a trip or off-site visit), which looks at central issues of the relevant topic. In order for the delivery to be more than simply didactic and teacher-led, these study days will contain activities for the pupils to think critically about what they hear, read and see. In other words, the KC aims to provide knowledge and also to hone critical thinking by encouraging the pupils to deal with the unfamiliar, make connections between the known and the unknown and become more enthusiastic about academic learning for its own sake. Departments will provide input in a lesson prior to the study day. Follow-up may take the form of a compulsory extended project at KS3 and a voluntary essay prize thereafter; at KS4 and 5, the plenary discussions and debates will reinforce understanding and test for the desired outcome in terms of knowledge and understanding. In the Sixth Form, the General Studies lectures will frequently be tied in to the themes for the year group, without losing their broader scope.

The most able pupils (those holding academic awards and others targeted by teachers) meet regularly in Academic Forums. Especially in the Sixth Form, but also in other years, these forums are open to any pupil who wishes to attend and to engage fully in the scholarly debate which they involve. In other words, scholars are directed to attend these meetings but others are encouraged to do so. The forums are delivered by members of staff (occasionally by a visiting speaker) on a rigorously academic topic, and the forums will be used now as a vehicle for addressing aspects of the KC at a deeper level for the most able. The termly programme for General Studies and for the Academic Forums is available separately, as is the document containing the full rationale behind the KC, the syllabus and the methodology of its implementation. (DCSF Standard 1. (2) (a), (b), (c), (h), (i), (j))

DMF

June 2009