



READING BLUE COAT SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

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

- Homework policy
- Assessment, Marking and Reporting policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Learning Support policy
- PSHEE policy
- Careers policy
- EAL policy
- Activities, Games and Co-Curricular policy

Aims

At Blue Coat, we believe it is important that all our pupils have the opportunity to experience a broad and balanced curriculum that is enjoyable, challenging and an effective preparation for further study. 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.

We aim for our pupils to 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.

When pupils leave Blue Coat, we want them to have the skills for university and the work-place; but also we want them to be knowledgeable and informed young people who have the skills to sustain a life-long love of learning.

Written Policies and Plans

Full details of the academic programmes of study are included in the individual schemes of work produced by Heads of Department and coordinated and stored by the Deputy Head (Academic). Through supervision of the department handbooks, and regular meetings with Heads of Department, including the annual target reviews,

he ensures that these do not undermine British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We currently have no pupil with an Education, Health and Care plan. The needs of any such pupil we may have at any time are coordinated by the Director of Learning Support (who is the SENCO), who ensures that statutory requirements and individual needs are met. The policy is laid out in full in the separate Learning Support policy.

The Curriculum in Outline

All pupils of compulsory school age attend school full-time (26.25 hours of timetabled lessons per week in Years 7-11; 24.5 hours in Year 12; 20 hours when a pupil takes only three A2 subjects in Year 13) and are given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. By maintaining a very broad range of subjects until Year 10, and having a policy of pupils taking at least ten subjects to (I)GCSE, the breadth of the educational experience is maintained for as long as possible. To foster linguistic skills, all pupils take IGCSEs in English Language and English Literature and, with a few exceptions, at least one modern language. All pupils take IGCSEs in Mathematics and Science (approximately half study the Triple Science award).

History, Geography, Religious Studies and ICT are all compulsory up to the end of Year 9; Art, Music and Design Technology are compulsory to the end of Year 8 and then at least one is studied in Year 9 or two if Latin is not chosen as an option. All the subjects mentioned are available at (I)GCSE, with Computer Science, Geology, and Physical Education also offered. Religious Studies is taken as a compulsory GCSE at the end of Year 10. Physical Education is taught in all year groups (except for those studying Triple Science in Year 10) and all pupils have weekly Games lessons.

Pupils are supervised in all classes in Years 7 to 11. There are no free periods in these year groups. When a pupil has a 'free' block of time (e.g. a pupil may arrive in Year 9 having studied no French or German/Spanish), the pupil goes to the Library and is supervised and registered there. Pupils unable to participate in Games are supervised by a member of staff in the Library or another published venue.

Details of the Curriculum by Year

Year 7 sets down a broad and general foundation in English, Mathematics, Science, French, German, Spanish, History, Geography, RS, Classics, Art, Music, Design Technology (DT), ICT and Physical Education (PE). The teaching of Library skills supports these. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and structured Assemblies, Games (Rugby, Soccer, Cricket and Athletics) and a range of other activities (Drama, Archery, Public Speaking etc.), complete the programme.

Year 8 is similar in structure to Year 7.

Year 9 retains the broad approach, but with separate teaching of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Geology. Any two of Art, Music and DT – or Latin – are also chosen at this stage. Pupils can also study Latin instead of one MFL at this stage, depending on the viability of class size. Pupils join the full programme of activities available on Thursday

mornings. The policy in Games from Year 9 upwards is to develop widening choice to enable pupils to explore and develop individual as well as team sports.

Years 10 and 11 retain the core subjects of English, Maths and Science, with Biology, Chemistry and Physics taught separately. A Modern Foreign Language and RS are also compulsory. All other subjects fall into three option blocks. In these blocks, the second language, the humanities, arts and technologies are distributed to enable maximum choice. This choice is controlled by advice, to ensure reasonable balance and the avoidance of premature specialisation. All courses lead to a full GCSE or IGCSE. This programme is supported by PSHEE, PE, Activities, Games and Assemblies.

The Sixth Form consists of three A level subjects, one chosen from each of three blocks, which are devised according to student choice. New subjects such as Business, Drama and Theatre, Economics, Government and Politics and Psychology are added to those studied at GCSE. Students also opt from within the Enrichment Block, which has a wide variety of subjects to choose from, several not being offered at A level. These include Classical Civilisation, Electronics and Film Studies. Students will complete an AS in their enrichment subject over two years. Alternatively, they can complete the Extended Project Qualification, preferably by the end of Year 12, to enable them to impress university tutors of their commitment to a particular course.

All students also take courses in Careers and compulsory sessions in Activities and Games, with a wide choice of options available. They also partake in the 'Special', which features external and internal speakers, study skills' sessions and House events. A small amount of time for private study is available in Year 12 with a greater emphasis on independent learning occurring in Year 13.

Speaking, Listening, Literacy and Numeracy Skills

Pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. Attention is paid to these skills across the curriculum and not just in Mathematics, Science, English, MFL and Latin. 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. Questioning and collaborative learning are at the heart of our academic aims and methods, as described in the Teaching and Learning policy.

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. A more detailed explanation of the School's approach is provided in our EAL policy.

PSHEE

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) within Blue Coat reflects the School's aims and ethos and underlines the respect for all in the community, in line with the Equalities Act 2010. It comprises a wide range of topics delivered throughout the year and to all year groups. Topics include safeguarding and understanding the risk from others, keeping safe online and building resilience to the risk of radicalisation and extremism.

It is delivered in the following ways:

- i. In years 7 to 11, there is a formal programme delivered in a single 35-minute lesson each week by a single teacher over the course of a year. The programme of study for each year group is devised and revised by the Head of PSHEE and its implementation is overseen by the relevant Head of Year (see the separate PSHEE policy). Pupils' attention is drawn to protected characteristics of the 2010 Act at regular intervals throughout the course.
- ii. Pupils in the Sixth Form have a double period each week (called 'the Special') in which lectures are delivered on a wide range of contemporary topics, usually from external providers, often echoing earlier elements of the PSHEE syllabus. Examples include substance abuse, disability awareness and mental health.
- iii. Particular PSHEE topics form part of the assembly programme each term and are addressed by members of the SLT; those leading the weekly spiritual assemblies also frequently deal with relevant topics.
- iv. Teachers are encouraged to deal with such issues in academic subjects as they arise and are highlighted in schemes of work (e.g. emotional responses discussed in the study of English Literature; social issues in Geography and Science, for example).
- v. Religious Studies, which is compulsory in Years 7 to 10, plays a crucial role in exploring PSHEE topics.

Careers Guidance

The Deputy Head (Academic) gives advice on GCSE and A level choices and produces a brochure annually with the most up-to-date information on the courses available, their content and their applicability to the full range of careers. This guidance is backed up by Heads of Year and Form Tutors in year-group assemblies and tutorial time. An evening is held in October, to which pupils and parents are invited, to explain the workings of the options systems at Blue Coat and the nature of the advice available. Pupils and parents then tour departments to initiate conversations about subjects and career choices.

At the beginning of each round in the choices season, the Deputy Head (Academic) reminds teachers of the need to present details of their subject and its possible career paths in a dispassionate way.

Consideration of the skills key to employability are addressed in PSHEE time from Y7. Pupils are provided with access to independent and impartial careers guidance and advice and are encouraged to use online programs, such as Fast Tomato, which endeavours to match interests and skills to potential career ideas. The aim is to enable pupils to gain sufficient information about courses, training, education and occupations beyond school so that they can make well-informed decisions about their subject choices and career pathways.

In Year 12, each pupil has a weekly period of Careers throughout the year. This is held in the Careers Library. The Careers course begins with pupils compiling a CV before progressing to an understanding of the UCAS system and an appreciation of other employment and training possibilities. This advice is then reinforced by tutors and the Sixth Form team.

Work experience is undertaken by all pupils at the end of Year 11 in a programme coordinated by the Sixth Form Administrator. Other opportunities for work experience and careers-related are also offered and encouraged, usually in the Sixth Form.

An annual Careers Fair is held in March each year, when visiting companies and professionals give advice to pupils and their parents on university courses and career possibilities.

Progress

All pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress. 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 A Level would be inappropriate for a particular pupil's ability.

Teachers take into account the needs of pupils, as a class and as individuals, when preparing lessons. In some subjects (e.g. Science, MFL and Mathematics), we set pupils to enable them to make progress at an appropriate level and speed.

Teachers pay heed to the Independent Education Plans drawn up for pupils with learning difficulties or with an EHC plan, and provision is made by the Head of Learning Support when she deems a pupil needs extra assistance when their first language is not English.

Activities and the Co-Curricular Programme

Blue Coat offers a broad programme of activities, which aid the pupils' personal, social, emotional and physical development and their communication and language skills.

In all year groups, there is a weekly double period of Activities timetabled. In Years 7 and 8, there is a carousel of five or six activities, which include archery, rock climbing, drama and public speaking. In Year 9 and above, pupils are given the opportunity to joining the School's Combined Cadet Force (which has an Army, Navy and Air Force section) or, from Year 10, undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. Other activities are also on offer, such as drama and photography, and, in the Sixth Form, lacrosse and the Sports Leader qualification.

All year groups have a weekly Games afternoon. A rich variety of sports are on offer; those naturally interested in sport are encouraged to foster and develop their talents to a high level. On the other hand, it is recognised that not all are natural sportsmen/women and that indeed 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.

A wide range of co-curricular activities is on offer. These are set out in more detail in the Activities, Games and Co-Curricular policy. The specific provision of these is tailored to the age of the pupils concerned and, in the Sixth Form, 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. All pupils are encouraged to attend these and to take part in them. Some activities have an academic base, some are more practical and artistic. 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 main school production once a year and smaller productions at least once a term, usually for specific year groups.

Teaching British Values

The breadth of the curriculum provides pupils with the experience of many issues which they will face in life in British society. The PSHEE programme at all levels explicitly encourages pupils to think about human relationships in an age-appropriate way; while such issues are regularly discussed in Religious Studies lessons and through the medium of English Literature.

The need actively to promote British values is promoted in various elements of the curriculum, most significantly in History and Government and Politics, and in PSHEE lessons, the 'Special' and whole-school and sectional assemblies.

Preparing a CV is covered in the Year 12 Careers programme (and, as part of the Year 11 PSHEE course) and financial issues are covered in the PSHEE programme and in Maths and Economics lessons.

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 Primary School placement, Young Enterprise, the CCF or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Numerous educational visits contribute further to this broader education, as do trips undertaken in the holidays, such as the visit to Uganda in conjunction with Brass for Africa and the expeditions to China and our partner school in Ghana.

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References:	
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