



SIR WILLIAM BORLASE'S
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

Senior Lead Reviewer : Louise Walder, Deputy Headteacher

Kay Mountfield, Headteacher

Committee: Curriculum, Learning and Progress

Reviewed: March 2022

Next Review: June 2024



*Inspire
Empower
Shape The Future*

This document should be read in conjunction with the curriculum pages on the school's website. It provides a broad overview of the school's approach.

Curriculum Statement

Inspire, Empower, Shape the Future

The Borlase Curriculum provides a breadth and depth of academic learning and cultural experience to excite and extend *all* our students, including SEND learners and disadvantaged learners. It is rich in knowledge and in opportunities to develop creativity, instilling a life-long enthusiasm for learning. It is a seven year journey with each year building on the previous knowledge and skills, inspiring and empowering our students to shape the future.

The distinctive, creative curriculum in Years 7 and 8 is rich in cultural learning and empowers *all* our pupils with important, valuable skills that support personal and academic development; these include creative intelligence, independent thinking, collaborative skills, resilience, confidence, leadership, time-management, interpretation and empathy.

In years 9-11 subjects are taught as disciplines; teachers enrich learning and inspire them with ideas outside and beyond the GCSE specification. There are trips, visits, practical explorations, independent research projects that augment the learning experience and promote deeper understanding for all students including SEND and disadvantaged learners; pupils are not on a five term conveyor belt moving towards an examination.

This leads on to an intellectually inspiring and empowering Sixth Form experience where students have a wide choice of academically challenging subjects that enable them to reach aspirational destinations to follow their passion. Their studies are extended by independent projects and wider learning, and their journey to being an independent learner is facilitated through academic and organisational skills learned in tutor time. The curriculum includes opportunities to contribute to the community through mentoring and volunteering; to develop leadership through running societies and clubs; and to understand and prepare for the wide range of possible future destinations they might choose.

Our curriculum is delivered by passionate, specialist teachers who encourage aspiration, intellectual curiosity and the exploration of their subject disciplines inside and beyond the classroom. It promotes a love of reading and literacy and develops oracy. It includes a broad range of super and extra-curricular opportunities which ignite and extend students' interests, enthusiasm and skills across a wide range of endeavours including those linked to academic subjects, to sports, the arts, engineering, AI, public speaking, creative writing, entrepreneurship and so much more.



The Borlase Curriculum develops our students' understanding of how they learn, enabling them to be effective independent thinkers and learners; it empowers them with positive strategies to prepare for examinations that support mental and physical well being.

The Borlase Curriculum also supports the Borlase culture and values, developing character based on and instilling a sense of moral and social responsibility. It teaches ethical leadership, reinforcing respect and kindness towards oneself, others and the environment.

The Borlase Curriculum inspires and empowers *all* our students to be happy and successful and to have the skills, knowledge, values and confidence to shape the future.

Section 1: How we achieve the Curriculum Statement by Key Stage

Broad, rich and creative - Years 7 and 8

The distinctive, creative curriculum in Years 7 and 8 is rich in cultural learning and empowers all our pupils with important, valuable skills that support personal and academic development; these include creative intelligence, independent thinking, collaborative skills, resilience, confidence, leadership, time-management, interpretation and empathy.

The Borlase curriculum provides a broad and rich educational experience in the first two years of learning. We aim to introduce students to a whole range of new ideas, knowledge and skills to inspire and empower them, encouraging aspiration and enabling them to make informed choices about their next steps towards their future pathways.

In order to achieve this, all pupils study discrete lessons in creative subjects taught by specialists alongside core subjects. The curriculum comprises English Language and Literature, Mathematics, History, Geography, French and German/Spanish, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, RS, Philosophy and Ethics, Art, Drama, Dance, Music, DT, MFL Food, Computing, Physical Education & Games and PSHE.

Many of these subjects are completely new to pupils in Year 7 and 8; some have had limited experience of them but not taught by subject specialists. The decision to give pupils at least a full hour per week of all of these subjects is rooted in a firm belief that young people benefit from the opportunity to have a *meaningful relationship* with these subjects to develop the confidence and skills to recognise their own potential and passion. All learners experience subjects to which they might not otherwise be exposed unless their families created these opportunities. The creative curriculum is accessible to all students including SEND/EHCP.

To enable the provision of the Year 7 and 8 broad, rich curriculum, slightly less time is allocated to core subjects (Maths and Science) although there is extensive enrichment in these subjects; this time is put back spread across years 9-11 once students have chosen options. To promote reading and literacy, all academic departments promote wider reading which is also included in the Tutor Programme. The English Department delivers discrete Library lessons in years 7-9. The Literacy



coordinator promotes literature, organises author visits. Creative Writing and essay competitions are promoted including at House Level.

Enriched Key Stage 4

In years 9-11 subjects are taught as disciplines; teachers enrich learning and inspire them with ideas outside and beyond the GCSE specification. There are trips, visits, practical explorations, independent research projects that enrich the learning experience and promote deeper understanding for all students including SEND and disadvantaged learners; pupils are not on a five term conveyor belt moving towards an examination.

The KS4 curriculum aims to provide a strong academic core to enable all students to demonstrate their command of a broad range of subjects to GCSE Level while giving them the opportunity for choice and specialism; we aim to enrich and extend students' learning across the three years, taking their education beyond the confines of the GCSE syllabus. We aim for all students to be empowered to follow their next chosen pathway.

In order to achieve this, in Key Stage 4 all pupils study 10 GCSE subjects with a core comprising English Language and Literature, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, a Modern Foreign Language, Mathematics, Philosophy and Ethics, Physical Education; they select three further option subjects without restriction on choice.

We do not insist all our pupils study History or Geography although between 80-90% have chosen to do this over recent years. We value pupils having the opportunity to choose the subjects that excite them and are confident that all experience a rich and broad curriculum in years 9 -11. All pupils study an HPQ/ Certificate in Philosophy and Ethics, developing humanities skills and exploring an appropriate RS curriculum. The study of Philosophy is essential to develop independent thinkers who approach all their subjects with consideration of ethical values.

Assemblies and enrichment activities also cover key areas from Geography/History such as Climate Change, World Wars, Holocaust memorial. There is the opportunity to take up either of these subjects and/or Politics or Economics in the Sixth Form without a GCSE in the subjects. We value giving our pupils free choice and for some students, two or even three creative subjects or a second language is appropriate.

Intellectually inspiring and empowering KS5

Key Stage 4 is followed by an intellectually inspiring and empowering Key Stage 5 where students have a wide choice of academically challenging subjects that lead them onto aspirational destinations to follow their passion. Their studies are extended by independent projects and wider learning, and their journey to being an independent learner is facilitated through academic and



organisational skills learned in tutor time. The curriculum includes opportunities to contribute to the community through mentoring and volunteering; to develop leadership through running societies and clubs; and to understand and prepare for the wide range of possible future destinations they might choose.

In KS5 our aim is to allow our students to specialise in the areas that excite and interest them and facilitate them to pursue their passion and aspirational pathway. We aim to develop our students as leaders with the confidence, skills and knowledge to shape their own future. At the same time we aim to educate them as future citizens of the world, opening their eyes to the world around them and understanding how they can make a positive contribution to society, whether local or global.

We achieve this in Key Stage 5 by offering students a wide choice of academic curriculum enhanced by an extensive enrichment curriculum and plethora of wider opportunities.

All our students study three A level subjects and 25-40 students each year study Further Maths as a fourth subject. Some students take an AS in an MFL as a fourth subject in year 12, or a BTech in Production Arts as an additional qualification. There is a very wide range of subjects available to facilitate student choice and opportunities to specialise in areas which excite them. This supports all learners, particularly SEND learners with a specific passion and talent.

Subjects available are: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computing, Art, Dance, Drama, English, Economics, Business Studies, French, German, Geography, History, Music, Maths, Further Maths, Spanish, Psychology, Sports Science, Politics, Production Arts (BTech). Students have free choice in year 12 and the timetable is built around their choices, rather than being fixed into blocks in advance.

All students are timetabled with an Extension and Enrichment programme that includes EPQ, Gold Crest, MOOCs and a weekly lecture series. They are encouraged to enter university essay competitions and take up external enrichment opportunities.

In the Sixth Form students follow the VESPA programme - Vision, Effort, Systems, Practice and Attitudes to support their development as effective independent learners. All students have timetabled, silent, supervised study with guidance for consolidation and extension. This helps them develop into independent learners and bridge the gap between GCSE and University study.

In 2020/21 we introduced an additional Half hour of teaching into Year 12 which we have retained in 2021/22 to recognise the recent challenges following the pandemic.

We are the only Grammar School in Buckinghamshire to offer Production Arts as a BTech. This applied, creative and technical course offers our students the opportunity to develop practical skills and expertise alongside their academic learning leading on to diverse pathways from acoustic engineering to set design. It has proved popular with scientists and arts students and with SEND learners who thrive on an applied course.

The academic curriculum is supported by social, moral and spiritual learning delivered through the PSCE programme, specialist tutors and assemblies.



There are no typical Borlasian destinations. Our students are empowered to choose from traditional university courses including Russell Group and Oxford and Cambridge, Medical, Vet and Dentistry schools, to music, dance, art and design conservatoires, film schools, apprenticeships and engineering traineeships.

Section 2: How We Deliver the Curriculum

Curriculum Intent

Each academic department is tasked to design their curriculum considering the structure, schemata, sequencing and school context. Each has considered their big ideas, what they teach and why, and how progression works in the subject, building this into their schemes of work. They have each developed and honed a curriculum statement that is on the website. Every department has ensured that its curriculum is accessible to all learners.

Each academic department considers how they address Equalities and Careers Education. Following COVID 19, departments regularly review how/whether sequencing/ content/ approach should be amended in response to this.

The school recognises Personal Development and Character Education as a key part of the Curriculum and offers a wide range of experiences accessible to all students.

Curriculum Implementation

The school was designated a **World Class School in 2019/20 by High Performance Learning** and was assessed by **Challenge Partners in March 2020** to be excelling in all areas of Teaching and Learning. The Borlase Learner and ATLS (Attitudes to Learning) have been developed into a coherent whole which brings together behaviours and learning attributes that students need to be successful and that can be developed.

The school aims to follow the principle of High Performance Learning, which recognises that all students can aspire to excel, no matter what their starting point.

The curriculum is delivered by subject-specialists. Subject leads and teachers plan sequences of learning which prioritise core and threshold concepts, and anticipate troublesome knowledge. Learning is sequenced, revisited, and interleaved in order to build understanding as the complexity of recurring topics and approaches increases towards end points. There is an emphasis on modeling and guided practice in order to move towards student independence and increase student self-efficacy.

Teaching & Learning CPD has focused on evidence-based research from Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience on how all students can learn best, understand knowledge and skills, remember, and apply their learning. CPD has used Cognitive Load Theory as a starting point to explore how learning is moved into long-term memory using structured learning in the classroom. Teachers



consider strategies linked to models of Deliberate Practice and Rosenshine's Principles of Direct Instruction.

Subject leaders for each Department have considered how subject-specific pedagogy and strategies can support students. This is focused on training and during Professional Development feedback after learning walks, and includes planning and provision for SEND learners. CPD sessions over the last two years have concentrated on specific SEND teaching and learning strategies that work best for each student. The new SEND department comprises the SENDCO who is qualified in the National SENDCO qualification and worked in SEND here for a year alongside our previous incumbent. We have a qualified Specialist Teacher and our team of Learning Mentors have undertaken a range of training in SEND support.

Teaching and Learning at Borlase recognises the importance of pupil, teacher, parent and peers in developing effective learning. This has been reinforced through PSHE, Parent information evenings, assemblies and tutor time. The Assistant Head (Teaching and Learning) leads sessions for all these audiences including parent workshops on learning to learn (for example, focused on revision techniques).

The Performance Management Process emphasises reflective practice as part of teaching and learning. Our approach to teaching and learning is detailed in the Teaching & Learning Policy.

Curriculum Impact

In order to assess the impact of our curriculum, the school reviews the impact of the curriculum considering:

- Exam results of Pupil Groups at KS4 and KS5 including SEND, PP, Boys, Girls, Ethnic Groups, Transition Groups.
- Readiness for next stages - A levels (Borlase) or Next Destinations - University/Specialist Colleges/ Employment/Traineeships
- Students' knowledge of possible careers and next pathways. Drop out from school/ courses, Requests for courses, Applications to the Sixth Form and to the school at KS3

Our key aim is that all students, including SEND/PP students, have the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed. We achieve this by monitoring the progress of groups within the year, responsive curriculum planning and understanding key transitions - from Primary/KS3 and KS4 into KS 5.

Section 3: Monitoring the Curriculum - Roles and Responsibilities



The Director of Studies and the Headteacher meet regularly with Heads of Department for Departmental Reviews of their Curriculum. Heads of Department have the freedom to develop their own curriculum intent working with their specialist teachers. Each middle leader presents their curriculum review and priorities to the Governors' Curriculum, Learning and Progress Committee.

The Director of Studies monitors curriculum impact in discussion with both Middle Leaders of the academic departments and the Heads of Year and Key Stage.

Governor oversight of the Curriculum is led by the Curriculum, Learning and Progress Committee and the Curriculum Governor.

The Assistant Head (Teaching and Learning) leads CPD and INSET on Curriculum Implementation with contributions from the SEND team including our in-house Specialist Teacher and other middle and senior leaders.

The Assistant Head (Personal Development) reviews the wider curriculum opportunities and is now supported by the Associate Assistant Head for Tutor Time, House System and Student Leadership. Students and staff present their experiences to the governor committee for Personal Development and Wellbeing.

For Further Details on the Borlase Curriculum, see

- Curriculum Principles and Provision Document
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- The School Prospectus/ website
- The Sixth Form Prospectus/website

