



READING BLUE COAT

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
- EAL policy
- 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.

Pupils study a wide range of academic subjects prior to them embarking fully on GCSE study in Year 10. 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.

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.

The needs of any pupil with an Education, Health and Care plan are coordinated by the Director of Learning Support, who ensures that statutory requirements and individual needs are met. The policy is laid out in full in a separate document.

The Curriculum in Outline

All pupils of compulsory school age attend school full-time, and are given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. By offering a broad range of subjects and having a policy of pupils taking at least 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 English Literature and, with a few exceptions, at least one foreign language. All pupils take GCSEs in Mathematics and Science (Triple Award Science and Double Award Science are offered).

Religious Studies is compulsory to the end of year 10. History, Geography, 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 two of Art, Music, Design Technology and Drama are studied in year 9. All the subjects mentioned are available at 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 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, a carousel of French, German and Spanish, History, Geography, RS, Latin, Art, Music, Drama, 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, except for 2 languages from French, German, Spanish and Latin being chosen.

Year 9 retains the broad approach, but with separate teaching of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Geology. Any two of Art, Music, DT and Drama are also chosen at this stage. 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 Foreign Language and RS are also compulsory. All other subjects fall into three option blocks. In these blocks, the second language, the Humanities, the Arts and the Technologies are distributed to reflect 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, Economics, 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 Electronics and Film Studies. Students

will complete an AS in their enrichment subject in the first year. Alternatively, they can complete the Extended Project Qualification by the end of Year 12.

All Sixth Form 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) is delivered in the following ways:

- 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
- 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. These issues are followed up in small group discussions during tutor time.
- Particular PSHEE topics form part of the assembly programme each term; those leading the weekly religious assemblies also frequently deal with relevant topics.
- 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).
- Religious Studies, which are compulsory in Years 7 to 10, play a crucial role in exploring PSHEE topics.

Careers Guidance

The Deputy Head (Academic) gives advice on GCSE and A level choices and produces brochures annually with the most up-to-date information on the courses available. This guidance is backed up by Heads of Year and Form Tutors in year-group assemblies and tutorial time. An evening is held in the autumn term, 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 professional way.

From Y7 Pupils are provided with access to independent and impartial careers guidance and advice in PSHE lessons. 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. 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.

Annual Careers Fairs are held each year, when visiting companies, professionals and Universities give advice to pupils and their parents on university courses and career possibilities.

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 join the School's Combined Cadet Force (which has an Army, Navy and Air Force section) or undertake 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 and Co-Curricular policy.

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 met 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.

PROTECTED

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