



BISHOP VESEY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL
Curriculum Policy
2023-2024

Review prepared by:	Deputy Headteachers
Review date/by whom	Updated September 2023
School's next annual review date/by whom:	September 2024 by Deputy Headteacher
Signed by Chair of Learning and Teaching Committee:	

1. SCHOOL MISSION VISION AND VALUES

1.1 The mission of the School is to provide inspiration and excellence for all our students. At Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, we are relentless in seeking to realise our vision.

1.2 Our curriculum is founded on this mission and vision and imbued with our values:

- Inspirational teaching and outstanding learning.
- Academic excellence, a spirit of enquiry and curiosity.
- Enrichment opportunities building leadership, independence and resilience.
- A warm, outward-looking community, celebrating and promoting diversity and equality, actively anti-discrimination.

1.3 This policy is written with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of The Child in Mind. All of our policies bear in mind Articles 3 and 28- the child's best interests and the right of the child to an education. This policy also bears in mind Article 24- every child has the right to develop their interests and abilities to the full.

1.4 Our School is committed to equality and combating racism and discrimination in any form. We are a UNICEF Rights Respecting School, where children's rights are embedded into the everyday culture of the School. We want to inspire our students to be active champions of equality and anti-racism with a passion to make the world a better place.

2. CURRICULUM INTENT

2.1 We want all our learners, irrespective of background, to be scholars, well equipped for life beyond school, with a deep knowledge, understanding and life-long enthusiasm for the subjects they are studying. Through our curricular and extra-curricular provision, we want to develop students of excellent character, responsible global citizens, who will make the world a better place through their kindness, thoughtfulness, confidence and resilience.

2.2 At Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, we believe that our curriculum should go well beyond the requirements of the national curriculum and should provide a broad and balanced experience for all our students. The curriculum is everything that happens in our School. It helps students learn and develop knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes. Learning takes place in the classroom, and also, for example, through Games, assemblies, theatrical and musical productions, expeditions, residential courses, educational visits, community work and our fortnightly co-curricular programme.

2.3 Our curriculum also aims to develop our students' sense of identity, through knowledge of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural heritages of the societies in which they are living. This includes an international dimension as we resume and increase the number of international trips in 2022-2023. Our curriculum also encourages an appreciation of the aesthetic, scientific and technological achievements of mankind.

- 2.4 The whole School curriculum develops an understanding of different beliefs, and helps our students to distinguish between right and wrong. It passes on enduring values and promotes equal opportunities. The personal development of our students spiritually, morally, socially and culturally plays a most significant part in their ability to learn and achieve high standards.
- 2.5 The school operates a challenging and rigorous three year KS3 programme of study and a two year KS4 programme of study. The exception is Science. GCSE Biology, Chemistry and Physics all begin in Year 9.
- 2.6 We encourage learning beyond the classroom through homework and by promoting our super-curricular booklet of activities for all learners. Students follow a fortnightly co-curricular programme.
- 2.7 The curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated to meet the evolving needs of our students and to incorporate appropriate educational developments and recommendations.

3. THE TIMETABLE

- 3.1 The school operates a two-week timetable.
- 3.2 Week 1 is a 25 period week. There are five periods per day, each of which lasts for 1 hour. This allows time for developed and rigorous learning. Week 2 is a 26 period week, incorporating one period of co-curricular provision.
- 3.3 Each morning begins with a registration or assembly session; as a minimum this is 15 minutes. Students arrive at form time and assemblies from 8.30am for a registration period.

4. KEY STAGE 3

- 4.1 Our provision follows a three-year programme at KS3 that delivers a 'National Curriculum plus' offer across all subject areas.
- 4.2 Students study English for 6 lessons a fortnight (Y7), 7 lessons a fortnight (Y8) and 5 lessons a fortnight (Y9). Students study Maths for 7 lessons a fortnight (Y7), 6 lessons a fortnight (Y8) and 6 lessons a fortnight (Y9). Students are in sets for Maths from Year 8.
- 4.3 We personalise learning by providing support and challenge so that students make the progress they are capable of. All students sit base-line tests in literacy and numeracy at the start of Year 7. Additional support for students is provided where necessary. All students are taught separate sciences: Biology, Chemistry and Physics right from the start of Year 7.

- 4.4 In addition, in Year 7 all students are taught Art, Computing, Design Technology, Food Technology, Geography, History, PE, PSHE, RE, Music and Games. They also study 2 languages from French, Mandarin and Spanish. The Mandarin provision includes 2 hours of lessons after school and 7 intensive Saturday learning experiences. This is part of the Mandarin Excellence Programme, a unique yet intensive language programme supported by University College London's Institute of Education and the British Council.
- 4.5 At KS3, PSHE provision is enhanced through assemblies, drop down days and guest speakers.
- 4.6 In Year 8 students study DT for half a year and Food Technology for half a year.
- 4.7 In year 9, all students also study Economics.
- 4.8 Additional to the taught curriculum, many students benefit from peripatetic music lessons or LAMDA lessons within the school day. There are a host of musical, dramatic and sporting opportunities for all students after school.
- 4.9 BVGS also aims to provide an outstanding Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) programme that spans throughout the school. The CEIAG refers to the full programme of careers education supported by personalised information, advice and guidance tailored to the individual needs of the student. The aims of the CEIAG are:
- To provide all students with an awareness of the relevance of all academic studies in the context of the working world.
 - To provide an opportunity for all students to develop an understanding of a wide range of careers and the associated career pathways.
 - To enable students to identify their strengths and interests and acquire the necessary experience in working towards a particular career goal, as well as looking to address any areas of weakness.
 - To enable students to make a fully informed choice about their future education and careers, providing full support and guidance in this regard.
- 4.10 To develop relationships with organisations, professionals and higher education establishments with a view to enabling students to secure valuable insights into potential routes of education and employment. To that end, in addition to the schools Career's Lead, the school also employs independent careers advisors.

5. KEY STAGE 4

- 5.1 All students study Maths and English for 7 periods a fortnight in Year 10. In Year 11 students study Maths for 7 periods and English Language and English Literature for 8 periods a fortnight. All students study separate sciences: Physics, Chemistry and Biology for 4 periods a fortnight per subject in Year 10 and Year 11. All students study PSHE fortnightly in Year 10. Students study PSHE in Year 11 through weekly timetabled pastoral lessons and also specialist drop down days. All students undertake both PE and Games.

- 5.2 It is compulsory for every student to study one core language from French, Spanish or Mandarin. In addition, students must choose to study either Geography or History. Students can opt for any combination of a further two subjects at KS4 from Art, Economics, Design Technology, French, German, Geography, History, Music, PE, RE, Computing and Spanish.
- 5.3 All students study the Birmingham Agreed Religious Education curriculum at KS4, through their weekly year assemblies, through the wider curriculum, and through termly drop down days.
- 5.4 The emphasis, as at KS5, is to encourage students to choose their own combinations of subjects that they enjoy; are good at and provide an insight into any potential future career. All option subjects are taught in mixed ability groupings. Students are supported through the options process with a comprehensive IAG (information, advice and guidance) programme involving tutors, one to one conversations and an extensive offer of information sessions/meetings and events.
- 5.5 We encourage all students to participate in sport as part of a healthy lifestyle and developing self-discipline.

6. KEY STAGE 5

- 6.1 Students enrol in an A Level programme of study over two years. Students have the option to elect any combination of subjects from a choice of 18 subjects, with the emphasis again being on what they enjoy, are good at and what they need to go on to study for their aspired degree/further education course or chosen career path: Art, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Design Technology, Economics, English Literature, French, Further Mathematics, History, Geography, Mathematics, Music, PE, Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Spanish.

We will be offering A level Mandarin from September 2023.

- 6.2 All students study 3 'A' levels. In some cases, students will study 4 'A' levels. At the end of the two-year programme students will sit exams in these A levels. All subjects are studied for 10 hours a fortnight in the Lower Sixth. Students also have the opportunity to do an additional qualification in Mandarin: HSK2.
- 6.3 Students in Year 12 are entitled and encouraged to undertake the AQA Extended Project Qualification. The skills students develop whilst undertaking EPQ not only help improve A Level performance but increase student confidence in terms of future study and career development. Students develop and apply decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, initiative and enterprise. It also challenges students to extend their planning, research, critical-thinking, analytical, synthesis, evaluation and presentation skill, whilst improving time management, notetaking, academic writing and referencing skills.

- 6.4 An exciting feature of our KS5 curriculum is Enrichment. Students are encouraged to do something to support the community, whether it be supporting the elderly in local care homes, volunteering in hospitals, working in local charity shops or mentoring within the school, mentoring in other primary and secondary schools as part of our Outreach programme or acting as Language or Sports leaders. All Year 12 students are expected to complete at least two hours of 'enrichment' each week. Participating in our enrichment programme alongside their academic studies, helps students to develop their inter-personal skills, knowledge and experience giving the edge when applying for further education courses or employment. It also encourages students to become part of the wider community that is BVGS and most importantly, enrich the lives of others, at their School or in the locality.
- 6.5 Year 12 students are encouraged to participate in the 'Vesey Award Scheme'. This is a formal certificate to recognise and reward individual participation in the co-curricular life of the School. Participation in the 'Vesey Award Scheme' provides students with the foundations for strong post-18 applications. It also encourages students to engage with the local community, whilst developing important skills such as communication, teamwork responsibility and innovation.
- 6.6 A unique feature of Bishop Vesey's Grammar School is our fortnightly co-curricular programme, which includes Botany, Creative Writing, Debating, Cooking, Politics, Stock Market Challenge, F1 in Schools, Strategic Planning, Astrophysics, Problem Solving, Hidden Histories, Well-being, Brainteasers, Chess, Latin and Coding.
- 6.7 An extensive range of extra-curricular activities are offered to students from all year groups, covering sport, music, the arts, academic support programmes, international and domestic trips, sports tours, dinners and celebration evenings, visits, enrichment to name but a few. The majority of Year 12 students are engaged in some type of mentoring of younger pupils. Other additional opportunities for Sixth Form students include volunteering to help with in class support for KS3 groups, a sports and language leader programme and a breath-taking range of musical activities including plays, concerts, senior soloists' evenings, busking weeks, piano recitals and orchestra etc. Students also have access to an outstanding Sports provision, which includes inter-school competition in a wide range of sports, including Rugby, Hockey, Rowing, Cricket, Cross-Country and Netball.