

Curriculum Policy

Key Principles

Our curriculum aims to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils, which stimulates their intellectual curiosity and enriches their minds
- Promote a positive attitude to learning and good study habits so that children are motivated to continue learning beyond the classroom
- Enable pupils to understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to apply these in relevant situations
- Support pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual development
- Encourage pupils to be active physically and to take responsibility for their own health.
- Prepare pupils for public examinations in order to enable access to further/higher education and employment
- Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Make pupils aware of both local and global issues and show them how they can contribute to society

Legislation and guidance

This policy is drawn up in accordance with the [National curriculum](#) for Key Stages 1-4. It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#).

It should be read in conjunction with our other school policies and guidance:

- PSHE and Citizenship Policy
- Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Careers Education, Information and Guidance Policy
- Marking and Feedback policy
- Assessment and Reporting policy
- Educational visits policy
- SEND policy
- Schemes of work
- Teachers' Handbook

Roles and responsibilities

i. *The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team* are responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to and that

- in each subject the curriculum content reflects the aims of the school
- schemes of work are reviewed regularly to ensure logical and consistent progression in each subject
- the amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate
- proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN
- professional support and training at the whole school, department and individual levels is given to teaching staff to enable them to deliver the curriculum effectively

ii. All teachers have a responsibility to deliver lessons of the highest quality to ensure that all pupils are engaged in learning and challenged appropriately. They must also develop effective strategies to assess learning to ensure that pupil outcomes are consistent with the learning objectives.

iii. The SEND Coordinator works closely with the teaching staff to ensure that SEN children are identified and guidelines are given to aid their academic development within the curriculum.

Curriculum structure

Infants and Juniors

We concentrate on core skills (reading, writing, spelling, maths) recognising that these are fundamental to success in future learning. We check progress through biennial standardised assessments in English and Maths.

In addition to the core skills, the curriculum for all children comprises Science, History, Geography, French, Music, RS, Art, Handicrafts, Picture Study, Composer Study, Drama (through enrichment, class assemblies and the Year 5 and 6 class play); Games, PE and PSHE. We also introduce Latin and Computing from Year 5.

For Infants and Juniors we aim to keep lessons short and focused, believing this helps maintain higher levels of motivation and concentration.

Through our weekly Enrichment programme, all pupils from Lower Prep to Year 8 also benefit from a wide range of educational visits, Forest school and in-school activities such as plays, poetry and music recitals, and sports day. Each year we also celebrate International Day and World Book Day.

We keep homework to a minimum, believing that we already have access to the best hours of a child's day. We also want children to have time outside of school to pursue other interests. Homework in the earliest years will focus on reading. By Year 2 pupils will have 30 minutes of homework a week plus daily reading. In the Junior School homework will increase gradually to 1 hour 45 minutes a week by Year 6. We recognise there are important self-management lessons to be learned from regular homework as children enter the Senior School. Setting homework also helps to develop a home-school partnership.

Seniors

In Years 7 and 8 students study the following subjects: English, Mathematics, Science, Latin, French, Spanish, History, Geography, Religious Education, Art and Design, Music, Drama, Physical Education, Computing, PSHE and Enrichment. The daily timetable is organised into eight 45 minute lessons per day.

Our pupils make their iGCSE subject choices at the end of Year 8, rather than the end of Year 9. This allows more teaching and learning time within each iGCSE course, enabling teachers to explore topics in greater depth, or explore more topics on a syllabus. As they progress through the course, pupils are thoroughly prepared to understand the demands of the exams themselves and develop good exam technique, but throughout their iGCSE years we keep the focus upon intrinsic reasons for studying each subject.

Most pupils take 10 subjects, although this may vary depending on individual ability and needs. Five subjects are compulsory at iGCSE: English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Chemistry and History. We teach in small mixed-ability groups, except for Mathematics which is setted to facilitate greater differentiation. The remaining 5 (or 6) subjects are optional, but must include at least one more science and a language.

Homework is an important part of the curriculum. It helps to develop self-discipline and the ability to work independently; it also reinforces, extends and enriches the work completed in the classroom. Homework time allocation per subject increases each year, from 20 minutes per evening in Year 7 to 45 minutes in Year 11. In Years 9 - 11 Independent Study lessons are a feature of the timetable that are designed to enable pupils to get some homework tasks completed during the school day.

In addition to the planned curriculum, enriching experiences such as History days, concerts, school plays, sports activities, visits from authors and school visits are planned to enhance the learning experience.

Distinctive Teaching methodologies

Our curriculum is underpinned by Charlotte Mason's guiding principles that 'Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life', and it is characterised by certain distinctive methodologies:

i. Living books

We prefer pupils to study whole books, rather than annotated versions, because we want children to develop the intellectual patience to engage with a sustained argument or narrative, to be capable of deeper reflection and analysis.

ii. Knowledge-rich curriculum

Our assumption is that developing an interest in all major areas of knowledge and facets of the human experience is intrinsically enriching. We believe that a child should be exposed to excellence in many forms, for example through music and art appreciation. In Infants and Juniors, pupils study the life and works of one composer and one artist each term.

iii. Nature Study and Forest School

Each week Infants and Juniors spend time outside exploring the natural world during nature walks and Forest School. Forest School sets learning in a different context for children where they can undertake a range of practical activities and carry out small achievable tasks. Children develop their team working and problem solving skills, improve their emotional well-being and also learn to become more independent.

iv. History

Each class in Year 2 and in Juniors makes a timeline in their classroom over the course of the year and each pupil keeps a book of Centuries from Year 3 up. In this way pupils develop a chronological knowledge of world events and appreciate how they link up to form the big sweep of history.

v. Verbal Narration

After listening to a short passage of a book, or looking at a painting, the child will recount, in his/her own words, what he/she has heard or observed. We believe that verbal narration has many benefits:

- it encourages children to listen attentively and observe closely
- by processing information and reproducing it children can store information more easily in their long term memory
- it encourages children to develop analytical thinking skills without getting stuck by the physical mechanics of handwriting
- it teaches children to express themselves clearly
- more ground can be covered because pupils can show what they know more quickly than if they were required to write it down

As children progress through the Junior school, they also produce an increasing number of written narrations. This teaching method is widely used in the Upper Infants and Juniors where a narrative 'Living Book' is used, for example, Composer Study, History and Science Biographies or for Picture Study.

vi. Dictation

In Juniors we use dictation regularly to reinforce spelling and grammar concepts, and improve note-taking skills and concentration. It is also a useful evaluative tool for the teacher to assess a pupil's language level.

vii. The Harkness method

In Harkness lessons students sit in a circle to discuss ideas or solve a problem, with only occasional teacher intervention. This method is used regularly in most subjects in the Senior School because it

- develops critical thinking skills
- encourages independent learning
- works through collaboration and constructive discussion

viii. Independent research projects

These are designed to create opportunities for self-directed learning. All pupils from Year 5 to Year 9 learn research skills as part of Enrichment. In addition, Year 6 pupils produce an independent research project on a topic of their choice; in Year 9 this takes the form of an extended essay.

ix. Championing books over screens

We deliberately prioritise books over computers because we believe it is a higher order skill to possess the intellectual patience to read a whole book. A key goal for our pupils is that they should feel at home in the world of books. This preference for books means that we choose not to use computers in class, other than for Computing lessons.

We expect children to do occasional computer-based homework, we have a Computing lesson once per week during Year 6 to Year 8, we do computing activities as part of our Enrichment Programme, and we are offering a Computer Science iGCSE. Other uses of computers are encouraged, such as:

- Practising keyboard skills as homework
- Internet based research as part of homework
- Presenting typed work in older year groups
- Using Google Classroom to access and submit homework tasks

Curriculum planning

i. Long term planning

Schemes of work have been drawn up by Heads of Department for each year group in each subject to ensure progression. They are held on our central computerised filing system and they are updated annually. They give an overview of the length, objectives, key vocabulary, and assessment strategies for each unit of study. They detail the main activities and key resources deployed in each unit of work, and supply sufficient detail to enable other teachers to pick up the programme of study at short notice.

ii. Short term planning

Teachers have a responsibility to maintain up-to-date plans for each unit of work, and must be able to provide evidence of weekly and daily lesson planning. Lesson plans must include the learning objectives, a basic explanation of the work to be covered, necessary resources and strategies for differentiation. These might include individual target setting, giving prior knowledge or help about topics to be covered, scaffolding and enabling questions, or a different set of resources, levels of support or expected outcomes.

Curriculum Delivery for SEN pupils

As a general rule, Heritage expects that its pupils will be able to access mainstream classroom teaching without the need for significant 1-1 support. With active support from parents, including a willingness on their part to pay for 1-1 work if necessary, we can serve children with specific special needs, such as dyslexia, effectively.

Pupils whom we judge to have special educational needs will have a PDP in lower school (Personal Development Plan). The class teacher, with support from the SENCo and the Head of School (Infants or Juniors) is responsible for completing this and maintaining it is up to date. PDPs are updated twice annually and detail areas of need, proposed outcomes and strategies to meet these. The PDP is signed off both by the teacher and the parent(s) concerned, either in person or by email. The PDP will be passed on to senior teachers when a pupil transfers to the Senior School and transfer notes will be shared between staff.

In the Spring term of Year 7 a pupil passport will be prepared by the SENCo (updated annually or when new information arises) to capture and share the ongoing and relevant information and strategies to support the pupil. This will be shared with all senior staff, the pupil and parents. Senior staff are then responsible for setting SMART targets and differentiating work appropriately (in liaison with the SENCo) for their specific subject areas. These will be reviewed and updated twice a year.

Where children have specific academic needs in relation to core skills, we aim to offer a modest amount of one-to-one or small group support with our teaching assistants weighted towards our infants and lower juniors.

We may recommend that a child do only one foreign language rather than two if that child has a particular difficulty with the English language.

We recognise that the more able also can be considered to have a 'special need'. Our rich curriculum is intended to aim high, and therefore to stimulate and stretch the most able. The content of the curriculum itself, plus effective differentiation, are used to extend the more able. Additional opportunities arise, such as being involved in the delivery of assemblies, for example to promote a charity the school is supporting; the Heritage independent research projects from Year 6 to 9 and the Maths Challenge in Seniors.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The teaching and learning provision at The Heritage school is monitored by Heads of Department and the Senior Leadership Team. Information about the quality of teaching and learning is gathered through a system of focused observations, book scrutinies and staff appraisals. We look at short and long term plans, track pupil progress through pupil welfare meetings and analyse exam results against baseline assessments. This information is used to inform planning and thus continually improve provision.

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