

Belfast Model School for Girls

Achievement for All



Curriculum Policy

Agreed by Board of Governors: Agreed Jan 2007 To be reviewed: Jan 2009

Rationale

The curriculum is the major vehicle through which pupils learn in school. The school aims state that we strive, “to promote an interest in and enjoyment of learning for life”. To achieve this aim we offer a relevant and stimulating curriculum within the current statutory guidelines. Our school curriculum is a dynamic structure and there is an emphasis on changing curricular opportunities to maintain relevancy, pupil enthusiasm and enjoyment and high standards of achievement.

Purposes

Our School curriculum:

- aims to produce confident young people who can learn independently and collaboratively
- is aimed at maximising pupil potential
- concentrates on the learning of knowledge, concepts, skills and appropriate attitudes
- contributes to the overall effectiveness of the school by helping to raise the pupil achievement
- addresses the needs of pupils and the wider community e.g. parents, employers
- strives to ensure personal and academic achievement both inside and outside the school for pupils of all ages, abilities and interests
- emphasises the importance of developing good citizens
- strives to provide pupils with a range of employment related skills e.g. time management, interpersonal skills, problem solving, ICT skills
- focuses on the learning of transferable skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT skills
- responds to changing demands from pupils, parents, the government, employers, institutions of higher and further education and other relevant community organisations
- is responsive to changes in the local, regional, national, continental and global contexts

Guidelines

The Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curricula are organised into subject areas to comply with the Areas of Study identified in the Northern Ireland Education Reform Order. In Key Stage 2 pupils may opt out of Areas of Study within the guidelines issued by the Department of Education. All pupils study P.E., Religious Studies, P.S.H.E. and Careers Education. All curriculum development is guided by the school’s aims and mission statement. Financial, personnel and other resources for curriculum development, as outlined in our strategic goals and related targets. Decision-making is channelled through curriculum sub-groups (organised broadly in line with Key Stages), chaired by the Vice Principal (Curriculum). The sub-groups are drawn from a cross-section of the teaching staff and are fluid in response to changing curricular developments.

KEY STAGE 3

All pupils follow the Northern Ireland Curriculum and have opportunities to study the following subjects:

English, Mathematics, Religious Education, Geography, History, Home Economics, Science, Technology, Physical Education, French or Spanish, Art and Design.

Courses in ICT, P.S.H.E., Citizenship, and Employability are also offered to all Key Stage 3 pupils.

Pupils are organised into broad ability bands by the Head of Year in consultation with the Vice Principal (junior School). The allocation of pupils to particular bands is re-visited at the end of each school year and there are opportunities for individual pupils to transfer between bands.

ASSESSMENT and REPORTING

Pupils in Years 8 and 9 receive a Progress Report at the end of the Autumn Term. End of year exams are held in May/June and are followed by a full academic report for each pupil. The school encourages regular testing of pupils in order to consolidate learning and provide diagnostic evidence to inform future learning. All subject teachers keep up to date records of pupil progress.

Pupils in Year 10 receive a Progress Report at the end of the Autumn Term. There are examinations in all subjects not involved in CCEA Key Stage Assessments early in the Spring Term. The school adheres to statutory assessment requirements for Year 10 pupils in English, Mathematics, Science and ICT.

PROCEDURES FOR KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM OPTIONS

The transition from Key Stage 3 to 4 is organised by the Vice-Principal (Curriculum) assisted by the relevant Head of Year, the Head of Careers and the Key Stage 3 Co-ordinator. A timetable of likely events is outlined below but there may be some variation from year to year:

By January

- Key Stage 4 curriculum planning completed

February – March

- Year 10 internal examinations
- Issue of Year 10 Reports
- Planning meetings with Careers and Form staff
- Information sessions for Year 10 pupils e.g. Department, Year Assembly, Information Afternoon (parents and pupils)
- Update Key Stage 4 Options Booklet
- Distribution of Options Booklets “Your Guide to Key Stage 4”
- Parent-Teacher Consultations for Year 10 pupils
- Allocation of pupils to interviewers (Careers & Pastoral staff)
- Interviews for all Year 10 pupils
- Issue and return of Options Forms
- Key Stage 4 Curriculum finalised

Over subscribed courses

Class size at Key Stage 4 often requires capping. This occurs for a number of reasons including the availability of appropriate rooms and their capacity, access to resources, health and safety and staffing issues. This results in the need to establish fair and consistent criteria for selecting the pupils most suited to a particular course. The criteria applied by the school include effort grades and teacher comments on Year 10 Reports, and attendance in Year 10.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT UNIT (ESU)

The school has a well-resourced unit for supporting pupil learning staffed by a SENCO and Assistant SENCO, two classroom assistants and additional teachers. Teachers are timetabled for the ESY and pupils are allocated specific times

for individual and tutorial group support. Further specialist support is provided by external services such as B.E.L.B.s Education Psychology Service. In addition, the ESU draws on the assistance of Year 13 pupils who support younger pupils through a paired reading scheme. The ESU is also used effectively for supporting pupils who have missed significant amounts of schooling due to illness or other extenuating circumstances.

The SENCO works closely with the school's Learning Mentors in identifying and supporting pupils with specific learning difficulties or pupils who underachieve due to the negative influences of identifiable barriers to learning.

KEY STAGE 4

All pupils follow the Northern Ireland Curriculum and a significant number of pupils are disapplied from certain Areas of Study within the guidelines set out by the Department of Education. The following subjects are offered at Key Stage 4:

G.C.S.E.: English, English Literature, Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Geography, History, Travel & Tourism, Child Development, Hospitality, French, Technology, Physical Education, Religious Education, Science (DA & SA), Sociology, Business & Communication Stds, Business Stds, Art & Design, Health & Social Care (DA), Music

G.N.V.Q.: ICT (Thomas Telford on-line course)
(Intermediate)

OCCUPATIONAL STUDIES: Hairdressing & Beauty (in partnership with BIFHE), Office Administration and Design & Construction

CERTIFICATE: Childcare (CACHE), Spanish, Word Processing

All Key Stage 4 pupils are entered for public examinations in English, Mathematics and Science and a majority study a further four subjects to GCSE or equivalent. In order to respond to the growing demand from pupils, parents and employers for a more vocational curriculum we offer alternatives to the traditional academic curriculum. The aim of this development is to enhance pupil motivation through increased enjoyment and opportunities for success. The school will continue to examine positive alternatives to traditional subjects so that all pupils experience a curriculum which suits their abilities, aptitudes and career ambitions.

At Key Stage 4 pupils are organised into broad ability bands on the basis of Year 10 examination performance, Key Stage 3 assessments and progress during Year 10. Particular attention is paid to pupil performance in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science.

ASSESSMENT and REPORTING

Pupils in Year 11 receive a Progress Report at the end of the Autumn Term. End of year exams are held in May/June and are followed by a full academic report for each pupil. The school encourages regular testing of pupils in order to consolidate learning and provide evidence for the planning of future learning. All subject teachers keep up to date records of pupil progress.

Year 12 mock examinations are held early in the Spring Term, followed by a full academic report for each pupil. In the Summer Term all Year 12 pupils take public examinations (GCSE, GNVQ Intermediate and Certificate Level).

KEY STAGE 5

Our post 16 curriculum reflects the breadth of ability, interests and aptitudes which exists among our Sixth Form pupils. Courses are designed to meet the needs of students, parents, further and higher education and employers. Provision is sufficiently diverse to provide flexibility of choice and opportunities for pupils to bridge the academic-vocational divide. All post 16 pupils have time for private study built into the timetable and courses in study skills are provided.

Courses Offered:

AS/A2 LEVELS:	English lit., Mathematics, Geography, French, Sociology, Technology, Physical Education, Religious Education, Business Stds, Biology, Chemistry, History, Art & Design
AVCE:	IT(SA), Science (SA & DA), Health and Social Care, Performing Arts (SA)
ONE YEAR COURSES:	Leisure & Tourism, Dip. in Bus. Administration. CACHE (Childcare Certificate)

Additional courses are available through a consortium arrangement with the Boys Model School e.g. Media Studies, European Stds.

All post 16 pupils have opportunities to take courses in Religious Studies, Physical Education, P.S.H.E., Careers Education (including Work Experience) and Key Skills (improving Your Own Learning). We also run an enrichment programme which includes activity/skills programmes such as Microsoft Academy ICT, Youth Bank, Young Enterprise, School Magazine and paired reading in the ESU.

PROCEDURES FOR POST 16 CURRICULUM OPTIONS

- January**
- Complete Post 16 curriculum planning
 - Update Post 16 guidance Booklet
 - Year 12 mock examinations
- February**
- Preliminary meeting with BMS for planning purposes
 - Year 12 Reports issued
 - Distribution of Post 16 Guidance Booklet
 - First Trawl of Year 12 pupils
- March**
- Return of Trawl 1 Forms
 - Provisional list of subject classes to HODs
 - Further meeting(s) with BMS
 - Post 16 subject grid completed
 - Presentation to Year 12 pupils e.g. new courses
 - Post-16 curriculum finalised (in consultation with BMS)

August - GCSE results and final placement on post 16 courses

PARENT-TEACHER CONSULTATIONS

The parents/guardians of every pupil in school have an opportunity to attend an annual Parent-Teacher Consultation. Parents/guardians will be notified well in advance of the date of the meeting. We emphasise the importance of every pupil being represented at the relevant Parent-Teacher Consultation as we value the important role that parents/guardians play in their daughter's attendance, attitude and achievement. Parents/guardians may also meet with teachers at other times, **by appointment**, to discuss their daughter's progress.

These policy Guidelines are translated into action through other policies and procedures, for example:

The Strategic Development Plan Attendance Policy Numeracy Policy Examinations Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy Policy for Entry into Post 16 Courses Assessment and Reporting Policies