



Blundell's

Curriculum Policy

2015/16

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Curriculum Policy

INTRODUCTION

Underpinning the curriculum is the school's policy of 'roots and wings', developed through emphasis on the following areas:

1. Character

To develop depth and breadth of character, which will encourage resilience, optimism, self-control and generosity within the rich Christian values that we have.

Within the curriculum, this is seen not only in the close working relationship between staff and pupil, but also within the positive relationships encouraged in the classroom between pupil and pupil. Part of developing our own characteristics of generosity and self-control includes our provision for enhancing understanding of fundamental British values, including democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is woven not only into the teaching of the whole curriculum but also specifically addressed in our lunchtime lectures, and in the PSHE, assembly, chapel and tutor programme.

2. Social Responsibility

To develop a sense of social responsibility and to be mindful of our role in our community towards each other, our role in society at large and in the global environment, which will encourage consideration, mindfulness and respect.

This is central to the conduct of our teaching and learning and is the guiding principle behind the PSHE programme, cross curricular events, trips and Field Day programme. Opportunities to develop social responsibility are built into the school week through tutor time, house meetings and through the organisation of the different teaching groups.

3. Independence

To develop independence, taking responsibility for our own growth and development which will enable us to show initiative, take ownership and feel satisfaction in what is achieved.

Within the curriculum, independence is encouraged not only through lesson activities and the demands of prep but also through marking and feedback, as pupils are given the opportunity to reflect with pride on their successes and to take responsibility for their own progress. Use of the library and BYOD is important here, allowing pupils opportunities to research and extend their knowledge outside the classroom. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on their progress and set themselves targets are built into the tutor programme and through formal self assessment each reporting cycle.

4. Excellence

To pursue excellence, aspiring to do everything as well as it can be done, which will develop a sense of justifiable pride and ambition

At Blundell's we define excellence as the development of pupil potential. Thus our curriculum facilitates the attainment of high standards in relation to the age, ability and needs of our pupils. We take pride in our individualised approach which allows every pupil to thrive and make

progress. The most able are encouraged to broaden their learning while those who need additional support have it built into their programme, rather than as an ‘add-on’.

5. Adventure

To develop confidence and a sense of adventure which will foster courage, curiosity and enterprise and originality.

Academic confidence begins with an excitement about learning both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to explore links between their classwork and the wider world through a wide variety of trips, visits and cross curricular events. This begins in the earliest years with the School House Diploma which encourages the personal development of skills such as independent learning through the curriculum and engagement with a personal and a team project.

ORGANISATION OF THE CURRICULUM

- Blundell’s provides a broad curriculum experience which allows pupils the opportunity to have progressively more challenging linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, aesthetic, creative, physical, human and social educational experiences, and to build positively on their learning in those areas within a supportive environment (ISSR 2:a).
- We offer a varied and balanced academic curriculum, with 21 subjects available at GCSE and 26 subjects in the Sixth form, whilst offering additional opportunities for students to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, drawing on the expertise and support of a dedicated, enthusiastic and well-qualified staff.
- Every department supports the development of pupils’ understanding of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect (British values). This can be seen through direct links in individual lessons for example on the causes of the Civil War in Year 8 History, the role of women in *Of Mice and Men* in Year 10 English or the ‘moral choices’ components in the Key Stage 3 and 4 Drama lessons. Moreover, throughout the curriculum, we ensure pupils are given a balanced viewpoint and the opportunity to explore a range of views – and, through classroom discussion and an open and tolerant atmosphere, pupils are taught to respect the views of others. (ISSR 2:b)
- We have a strong commitment to optimising teacher to pupil ratios, and catering afresh for the academic preferences of pupils each year with timetable block flexibility at GCSE and A level whenever possible. Class sizes are therefore only occasionally ever greater than 20, and may be less than 5 for some A level subjects. More typically, classes are between 14-20 until Year 11, and then 10-14 in the Sixth Form although these will vary each year.
- Our focus is to enable senior pupils to access the academic subjects which most closely match their interests, aptitudes and aspirations; this helps them to develop their potential with enthusiasm and confidence. Academic departments work closely with tutors to ensure each pupil has the right programme for them and the Year 11 tutors working with the PSHE department take the lead in using the Morrisby feedback provided by the Careers department to help the pupil make the best possible decisions (ISSR 2:e).
- Annual Parents’ meetings for each year group and twice a year in Year 13, allow parents the chance to meet pupils’ teachers and tutors in person. Each of these is preceded by an Academic Parents’ Forum which is led by the Deputy Head, Academic, covering detailed information relevant to that year group and looking ahead to the next stage. The Head of the Year and the Head of Careers will also participate in these forums where relevant, and communication is encouraged at any other time as required. Parents receive full termly feedback on academic

progress and personal development via reports and tutor letters, with an additional of Mark Orders each term giving briefer updates on effort and attainment levels.

ENRICHMENT

- We are committed to ensuring that opportunities to learn outside the classroom are available every year to each pupil as they progress through the School (ISSR 2:f). We have a Field Day each term when all pupils are invited to participate in trips, outings, visits and workshops. We are fortunate to be in a geographical location which allows easy access to some outstanding facilities such as the Eden Project, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Haldon Forest, Broomhill Sculpture Park, Woolacombe Bay, Dunster Castle, Cheddar Gorge, Longleat, Escot Park, @Bristol, Paignton Zoo and the Blackdown Hills amongst others.
- An imaginative programme of cross curricular events are devised for Years 7 – 9. These include a Maths and Business morning, a Physics and Design morning, an Art and History event and a Music and German morning. Every weekend during full term, different groups of pupils will have outings arranged (in addition to a full sports fixtures programme) which have included coasteering, paintballing, quad biking, cinema visits, Ten Tors training, Duke of Edinburgh expedition practice. Participation in these is voluntary and we are delighted that so many pupils take up these opportunities, bringing a real sense of community to the school throughout the weekend as well as the working week. Opportunities for wider travel and adventure come through projects such as the Community Laos project, the World Challenge trip to Borneo and links with projects such as the House of Hope orphanage in Nepal.
- The Activities programme offers a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' leadership and teamwork skills as well as fostering the British values of democracy, liberty and mutual respect. Through the School Council, pupils have the opportunity to comment on events such as Field Day or the school Christmas meal and suggest improvements. Pupils participate in whole school events which reflect the national scene, including the 2015 mock election and the planned 2017 referendum on the EU.
- Pupils in Years 7 and 8 receive a lecture once a fortnight to support the School House Diploma. This may be on the Learners' Toolkit theme of independence, teamwork and communication, on character education, developing generosity, resilience, optimism and self-control, or on general interest topics including the life of Ghandi and the definition of success.
- We are involved with the local community in many different ways, ranging from volunteering (visits to residential care homes; work with primary age pupils) to support of charities through local fundraising events such as joint Art exhibitions and musical concerts; and hosting lectures (including the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Institute of Economic Affairs), dramatic productions (Garden Opera), and local clubs such as the Tiverton Astronomy Society, from which our parents, staff and pupils also benefit. We host local schools including Tiverton High School and Heathcoat Primary School to events such as author visits and take our responsibility within the community very seriously.
- We seek to broaden pupil horizons through a varied programme of sport and activities which are provided after lessons, with many opportunities to develop physical, mental, aesthetic, creative and problem-solving skills. Chapel Choir, Chamber Choir, Big band, Orchestra and Soul Band are some of the larger musical ensembles, whilst annual House Plays and school plays or musicals provide a range of opportunities to perform, design and direct. The house public speaking and debating competitions are fiercely contested. Students participate in the Enterprise programme (via the Economics Society or the Young Enterprise scheme) and contribute to the editorial team of the school magazines and publications. Many older pupils also take the opportunity to run Academic Societies. All major sports are coached, and a full

fixtures programme allows for pupils with different levels of sporting ability to participate in matches. Blundellians have reached prominence at both County/Regional and National level in Rugby, Athletics, Cross Country, Hockey, Equestrian, Fives, Squash, and Target Rifle. The annual Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race is proud tradition, as is the historic inter-house Russell Cross-Country Cup and Open Competition which is a highlight of the Spring Term.

- The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is compulsory for four terms (Year 9/10) but many pupils opt to continue their involvement in working towards NCO rank promotion and developing a wide range of leadership and personal skills through adventurous training.

THE PSHE, CAREERS & 'FUTURES' PROGRAMME.

- The PSHE programme has protected time each week and is taught by experienced staff (ISSR 2:d) . Girls and boys are taught separately in Years 7-9 and for specific topics thereafter, otherwise in co-educational groups in the older years. The emphasis here is on enabling pupils to make the right decisions for themselves (ISSR 2:g). The British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance are explicitly taught here. Topics include e-safety; bullying & cyber-bullying; children and the law; nutrition and healthy eating; self-esteem & assertiveness; time management; puberty & adolescence; divided families; peer pressure; sexual health; alcohol and drug use/abuse; discrimination; the work of the police; UK and European government; rights & responsibilities; political participation; human rights; personal budgeting; mass media; global issues (water wars, famine, organic & GM crops, population growth, women's rights, AIDS/HIV).
- The programme for PSHE in the Sixth Form includes presentations from visiting experts and agencies. These presentations are well received by pupils, particularly on topics such as sexual health, safe driving, drugs and alcohol. The talks are generally scheduled into study periods or Futures periods without affecting teaching time.
- All Sixth Form pupils follow a 'Futures' programme in their free 'block' (1 period per week on an annual programme). This comprises an introduction to UCAS and Careers advice, advice on interviews, Oxbridge entry and preparation and related topics. Pupils not wishing to go on to University are also guided and supported; destinations have included the Armed Forces, Foundation courses and direct employment (ISSR 2:e). Pupils work with the same Futures teacher throughout the year in small groups with full ICT access, which allows for a very personal level of support, additional to the guidance received from their Academic Tutor, advice from the Head of Careers and the resources of the Careers Department.
- The Lower Sixth programme begins with pupils presentations and self-reflections on their work experience before moving into familiarising pupils with the UCAS process and website (University & College Admissions System) which most will use to apply for places at Higher Education Institutions. This is also the focus in the Autumn Term of the Upper Sixth, with the Spring term programme focusing on managing a budget whilst away from home. Many pupils return for advice as Old Blundellians (for example if they are making an application in a GAP year) and we are happy to provide time and expertise to support them.
- The focus of careers guidance in the younger years is on providing access to a range of activities which inspire young people. This takes place for example in lectures and assemblies when Year 12 students give presentations to Years 7-9 on their work experience. Students consider their own strengths and weaknesses from Year 8 in PSHE which begins to sharpen their ideas on the sorts of work which might best suit them. In Year 9, guidance is given both in PSHE, in year group assemblies and by the tutors regarding GCSE options and different careers that they may lead to. Strong links are built with employers, many of them who are Old Blundellians. They

come to the school to give 'Careers lunches' open to students in Years 9-13; recently we have welcomed speakers from John Lewis, the agricultural sector and the marketing sector.

- In Year 11, students attend a 'Facing the Future' event in the first week in September which introduces work experience, university choices and a variety of alternatives including apprenticeships and school leavers employment. In the same week, Year 11s take the online adaptive Morrisby test and discuss their findings with their tutor and a report is written to parents. This leads into the Employability event, in which students have the opportunity to work in small groups with leaders in different careers. Work experience is completed by the Year 11 students after their GCSE exams.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE MOST ABLE

- At the centre of our curriculum is a commitment to excellent teaching which allows our most able to benefit from challenging subject material and extension work both within the classroom and for prep (ISSR 2:h). In addition our most able have the opportunity to participate in external competitions run by Newnham College Cambridge, the Royal Society of Chemistry, the Bank of England, Maths Olympiads and Physics Olympiads, Arkwright Scholarships, as well as our own Blundell's Essay Competition.
- Pupils who show exceptional academic talent are identified through the use of baseline data and the awarding of academic scholarships. These pupils, as well as those who self-select, are members of the 'Scholars' Society' which meet twice each half term. Topics of general interest are discussed ranging from 'the art of rhetoric', "Time travel, String theory & the End of the Universe" and "Psychoacoustics, the decibel and the basillar membrane"
- Their love of learning is celebrated at The Scholars' Dinners each year, which provides the opportunity for this group of pupils to meet together for a social event with a guest speaker. Tickets for this dinner are highly sought after and enable students to take pride in their academic achievements and enjoyment.
- Those identified as scholars or the most able receive a personal interview each Spring term as part of the Scholars' review. Pupils explore what they enjoy about learning, and are encouraged to see challenge as a positive learning opportunity. They set themselves targets and, with the interviewer, identify opportunities available to stretch themselves. Regular academic monitoring meetings at mark order period (once a half term) are used to identify pupils who may benefit from this provision.
- For those considering an Oxbridge or a medical application, the process begins in Year 10 when pupils are invited to attend the South West gifted & talented conference. In Year 11, pupils are encouraged to aspire highly through a series of lectures and visits to Oxford University as part of the Field Day Programme. In the Sixth Form, we have an enhanced discussion programme which also includes specific interview preparation, guidance and advice.
- Pupils wishing to study an additional GCSE or A Level are encouraged to do so in the 'block 10' slots which are timetabled twice a week. Pupils may take an additional ancient or modern language or Further Maths at A Level in an accelerated class with additional periods of Maths (2 periods in L6 increasing to 6 periods in U6).
- We offer and encourage members of the Sixth Form to undertake an EPQ in addition to their 4 A level programme. Pupils wishing to undertake an Extended Project in the Sixth Form are supported by the Extended Project Co-Ordinator and a personal mentor and it is taught through the weekly activities programme.

- Those who show exceptional talent in areas such as music, drama, sport and art/design also merited in extra curricular activities, such as elite sports programme or the specialist art society. They are invited to participate in various master classes in art, drama and music.

SUPPORTING LEARNING (SEND / EAL)

- All our students have full access to the curriculum. Students with SEN or EAL are assessed as they enter the school so the right provision can be put in place for them. A small number of pupils who will struggle to access the full curriculum successfully may follow a reduced programme which is determined in consultation with their families, the TESOL or Learning Support Department, Houseparents and the Deputy Head, Academic. Close monitoring of the progress of such pupils can allow for adjustment at any point during an academic year (ISSR 2:h). Should any pupils have a statement, their needs are suitably accommodated.
- The Learning Support department is fully integrated within the curriculum. Links are made with the pupils' primary / prep school in Year 6 so the appropriate provision can be made. We are flexible in the design of an individual pupil's curriculum so pupils can gain the support they need – with the aim of the support being phased out as they get older and make the appropriate progress in their learning.
- Pupils on the Learning Support Register all have an individual education plan which is designed in conjunction with the pupils themselves and which is made available to staff through the 3SYS management information system.
- The TESOL department is similarly integrated and offers help for pupils whose first language is not English - usually around 10% - 12 % pupils. Lessons for EAL pupils are integrated into the curriculum and, in the lower years, are usually timetabled in place of a Modern Foreign Language. International Students in Year 11 may take IGCSE in English as a Second Language. International Students in the Sixth Form will take the IELTS qualification in addition to their A Level studies and may also take an A Level in their native language.
- There is close liaison between the Learning Support and the TESOL department and the other departments. Advice is offered by both departments for teachers to ensure that pupils with special needs are fully supported within the curriculum as well as with additional support. Both departments offer 'clinics' in the activity programme to which pupils can bring work which they are finding difficult. Regular academic monitoring meetings at mark order period (once a half term) are used to identify those who are struggling and who need extra support.
- Close liaison between these Departments and the Exams Officers also caters for access arrangements in some internal exams as well as public exam situations, such as pupils requiring extra time or use of a laptop or scribe. These pupils are in the minority but their needs are carefully identified. We benefit from employing an Educational Psychologist, as Head of Learning Support. She and a member of her team are qualified in assessing the appropriate levels of need and where feasible, separate examination arrangements are put in place for extra time candidates in order to minimise the level of disruption experienced.

SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS

- Blundell's recognizes that pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. Some children with medical conditions may be disabled and where this is the case the school will comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010
- Some pupils may also have SEND and may have a statement or Education and Healthcare

Plan (EHC) which brings together their special education provision and the SEND Code of Practice (2014) is followed

- Blundell's Sanatorium is responsible for supporting pupils with medical conditions within our school community

CURRICULUM IN YEARS 7, 8 AND 9

- There are four academic teaching groups in each of Years 7 & 8 to accommodate around 55 pupils, and five teaching groups in Year 9 (for around 90 pupils) setted to some extent by ability. We make minor adjustments each year if the academic profile and needs of the cohort dictate, but for 2015/2016 :
- Year 7 are setted separately for Maths and French and otherwise in 2 parallel upper forms & 2 parallel lower forms. The entrance exam data is used as the main instrument for this form group setting.
- Year 8 setted separately for English, French and Maths, with revised form group allocations based broadly on academic performance in Year 7. Two upper parallel forms with two parallel lower forms.
- Year 9 setted separately for English, French, second language (Spanish/German) and Maths. The sets are arranged using data on the whole year performance together with new pupil entrance /scholarship exam data used for setting. For all other subjects they are taught in parallel upper and parallel lower groups.
- The number of teaching periods allocated to each subject is given in the grid below.
- Each teaching period is 35 or 40 minutes long depending on the time of day
- Years 7 & 8 have lessons on Mon-Fri only; in Year 9 pupils have Sat morning school (which consists of 4 academic lessons)
- A termly programme of activities and games is arranged for the time between lessons and the end of school at 5.30pm.
- PSHE is taught in groups by a team of experienced PSHE teachers. There is also academic Tutor contact time built in to the week as additional pastoral support.
- In Years 7 & 8 all pupils do French and Latin. In Year 9 they may choose German or Spanish as a new (second) Modern language, and may choose whether or not to continue with Latin.
- For pupils who choose to continue with Latin (usually between one quarter and one third of the year group), we have created a termly rotation of the Expressive Arts (Drama, Music, DT, Art) catering for their preferences. Pupils not studying Latin in Year 9 will choose two subjects as their major choices which they study throughout the year. They study the other two subjects with Classical Civilisations as a rotation as indicated below.
- For one set of pupils, generally those who receive TESOL or Learning Support, the study of a second language will only be taken at the discretion of the Head of MFL. Additional support lessons may be timetabled in these slots.

SUBJECT	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9
English (speaking, reading, listening and writing skills are all developed)	4	4	4
Mathematics	5	5	4
Separate Sciences are taught throughout			
Biology	2	2	3
Physics	2	2	3
Chemistry	2	2	3
French (speaking, reading, listening and writing skills are all developed)	4	4	4
Latin / Classical Civilisations	2	2	4 (non Latinists take CC on a rotation)
Art (photography and digital as well as drawing, painting and 3D skills)	2	2	(Can be chosen as major or minor) 2
Design & Technology (including Graphics and Computer Aided Design/Modelling)	2	2	2
Drama	2	2	2
Music	1	1	2
Computing	1	1	1
Geography	2	2	2
History	2	2	2
Physical Education (& timetabled Games)	2 (& 2)	2 (& 2)	1
Religious Studies	1	1	2
German	-	-	4] one
Spanish	-	-	4] only
PSHE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education)	1	1	1
TOTAL number of periods per week	39	39	40

CURRICULUM FOR YEARS 10 & 11

In the Spring term of Year 9, students are asked what subjects they would like to choose at GCSE following guidance sessions with the Head of Careers within the PSHE programme from tutors as part of the tutorial programme, consultation with parents at the annual Parents' meeting, an Academic Forum led by the Deputy Head, Academic and Head of Careers, Parents and pupils are also directed to the Launchpad website (via the school's login) which is an excellent resource in helping to make decisions about future courses of study.

The teaching blocks are then constructed, based on these choices, to enable as many students as possible to study their chosen combination. For at least the past five years virtually every student has been able to study their chosen subjects.

All examined GCSE/iGCSE courses have 4 periods per week, except English (5 periods) and Maths (5 periods). Pupils are set by ability in these subjects and if appropriate can move sets during the two years without negatively impacting on any other lessons. Pupils are also set by ability for Modern Languages.

Pupils will sit 9 or 10 GCSEs from the 21 subjects available, comprised of the following:

English Language } or a combined English programme when it is deemed appropriate.

English Literature

Mathematics

A minimum of two separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)

For the remaining five subjects almost all students will take a Modern Foreign Language and most pupils study at least one, along with at least one Humanity (History, Geography, RS) from the options below. RS can also be studied as a short course GCSE (see explanatory notes below).

- Art
- Design & Technology (Resistant Materials OR Graphic Products courses available)
- Computer Science
- Business and Communication Systems
- Music
- Drama
- French
- Spanish
- German
- Latin (Greek may also be taught and examined although some lessons may be off timetable)
- Geography
- History
- Religious Studies
- Classical Civilisations
- Mandarin (for those with prior experience)

Students requiring TESOL may take fewer GCSEs subjects and receive additional lessons in that subject block. Alternatively they will follow a full GCSE programme and receive lessons in the General PE/RS non-examined block. In addition, pupils have a period of each of the following in Year 10:

- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education)
- Religious Studies Short course GCSE or non-examined general Religious Studies/General PE rotation
- In some cases GCSE pupils may take an additional subject which is taught within this block.

* Pupils needing Learning Support lessons have their lessons scheduled here to ensure they do not miss any teaching time in the examined curriculum subjects.

SIXTH FORM STUDIES

We recommend that students choose 4 subjects to study at AS level and then to continue with 3 of these to A level (although it is possible to do more than this). The majority of subjects are timetabled for 8 periods each week but this may be reduced if there are only a small number of students wishing to study a particular subject. If numbers are exceptionally small, the option may not be viable but this is unusual.

Pupils choose their subjects in Spring of Year 11 and the timetable grid of blocks is devised to best suit the options selected and to allow the largest number of pupils the opportunity to study the combinations of subjects they have chosen.

Art (Fine)	Geography
Art (Photography)	German
Biology	Government & Politics
Business Studies	Greek (* teaching will be available if demand is sufficient)
Chemistry	Latin
Classical Civilisations	Mandarin (where pupils have experience of this subject prior to Sixth Form)
Computing	Mathematics / Further Mathematics (guided choice)
History	Music/Music Technology
Design and Technology	Physics
Drama and Theatre Studies	PE
Economics	Psychology
English	Religious Studies (Ethics)
French	Spanish
Film Studies	

Reviewed by CVS

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