

Curriculum Policy

Independent Boarding and Day School for Boys and Girls

Royal Hospital School

November 2017

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A. Introduction

The Royal Hospital School (RHS) is a boarding and day school and its curriculum should be considered in that light. In addition RHS has a unique heritage expressed in its links to Greenwich Hospital and its long-standing naval traditions. While the curriculum will continually evolve in the light of modern educational thinking, certain aspects of this heritage will always be found in the general life of the School, including its curriculum.

The Curriculum Policy is intended to serve as a general guide to the curriculum and as such it should be of use to staff and parents. It can be read in conjunction with the various guides are concerned with the details of the subject courses within the curriculum. Where there are references to other documents within the Curriculum Policy, these are all contained in the Academic Section of the Staff Handbook. These documents can made available to parents on request. The Curriculum Policy gives an overview of the policies which span all subject areas, while specific operational detail is found in the Curriculum Plan (ISI reference 2b).

B. General Principles

B1. Regulatory requirements as originally laid down in The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 and (Amendment) Regulations 2012, and then updated by The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

B1.1. The statutory instruments governing the school's curriculum are as follows:

- I. The proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, is drawn up and implemented effectively;
- II. that the written policy, plans and schemes of work:
 - take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan;
 - and do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
 - which provide:
 - (a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age, which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - (b) that pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
 - (c) *where the principle language of instruction is a language other than English, lessons in written and spoken English, except that this requirement shall not apply in respect of a school which provides education for pupils who are all temporarily resident in England and which follows the curriculum of another country; (n/a)*
 - (d) personal, social, health and economic education which reflects the school's aims and ethos; and encourages respect for other people;
 - (e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that
 - is presented in an impartial manner;
 - enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options;
 - helps them to fulfil their potential;

- (f) *where the school has pupils below compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills; (n/a)*
- (g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
- (h) that *all* pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress; and
- (i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

B1.2. The standard is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:

- (a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
- (b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical or creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- (c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
- (d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
- (e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- (f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
- (g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
- (h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;
- (i) does not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and
- (j) does not discriminate against pupils.

B2. The Curriculum at RHS

At RHS, we believe that the curriculum must support the school's aims, of which there are seven:

- to develop intellectual curiosity and academic confidence;
- to enable pupils to grow into the person they wish to become, fulfilling their potential and prepared for life after school
- to inspire leadership, adventure and self-discovery;
- to foster creativity and imagination;
- to provide a secure and nurturing community which promotes wellbeing, fitness and healthy competition;
- to instil the values of service, loyalty and commitment and uphold the School's unique and rich heritage;
- to cultivate a global outlook and environmental responsibility.

At RHS, we believe that the curriculum should:

- above all play a central role in preparing pupils for later life;
- engender an appreciation for learning and an acceptance of its lifelong nature;
- build self-confidence by differentiated challenges leading to a willingness to achieve the best that lies within the pupil's capabilities;
- engender mutual respect, an appreciation of the talents of others and a willingness to celebrate achievement;

- build on a pupil's educational experience prior to joining RHS and be aware of the diversity of this experience;
- provide adequate opportunities for all pupils to succeed regardless of their specific educational skills and first language;
- give pupils ample opportunity to experience creative and practical subjects;
- challenge pupils to broaden their experience, knowledge, interests and skills by exposing them to a wide range of subjects at KS3;
- give pupils a wide range of optional subjects at KS4 and KS5;
- include opportunities to discuss broader life issues;
- include opportunities for physical exercise;
- include opportunities for a developing appreciation of culture;
- respect and express the unique heritage of the Royal Hospital School.

Following from these principles, there are a number of practical consequences:

- English, mathematics, science and a foreign language are compulsory to GCSE, although pupils may select three Separate Sciences or the Combined Science award route and there are a few pupils who do not take a foreign language as a result of needing support in other curriculum areas;
- There is an opportunity to learn a second modern foreign language or Latin (and Classical Greek in the sixth form)
- All pupils are taught to sail during year 7;
- CCF is a compulsory activity for all pupils in years 9 and 10;
- The A Level and GCSE option blocks are worked out after pupils have given their preliminary choices to allow as wide a range of choice as possible within the constraints of the school timetable;
- PE is compulsory up to year 10;
- PHSE is compulsory up to year 12;
- Pupils in Years 7-9 follow a the Compass course, which encompasses PHSE, critical thinking, digital literacy and computer literacy;
- A Sixth Form elective programme exists for Year 12 allowing pupils to choose a fourth examinable subject in addition to their A Levels specific subjects (e.g. A Level Further Mathematics, the Extended Project Qualification, BTEC Level 2 qualification etc);
- A Sixth Form enrichment programme – RHS+ and RHSXtra – is run for Year 12 to help prepare them for life beyond school (eg lectures and a carousel of PSHE, money management, digital literacy, cooking on a budget and careers advice);
- For one remaining year, the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) is an alternative option to one GCSE (pupils in Year 11 only);
- Pupils are only put in sets by ability where this is felt to be necessary, such as in mathematics in Year 7, and mathematics, science and English in year 8;
- Support is provided for pupils with specific educational needs, usually on a withdrawal basis, up to an usual maximum of four periods per week;
- Support is provided for pupils whose first language is not English, on a withdrawal or subject replacement basis, up to an usual maximum of four periods per week;
- Pupils with specific learning requirements receive lessons in targeted literacy and numeracy;
- There is a fair and open system of academic rewards and sanctions.

C. Internal Examinations, Reports and Parents' Meetings.

There is an annual schedule of internal examinations, reports and parents' meetings. All parents will receive at least one full written report a year, as well as regular measurements against challenge grades.

D. Careers Guidance

The Head of Sixth Form and Careers oversees the organisation of careers guidance at RHS.

All pupils are introduced to key careers themes as part of the Compass programme in Years 7-9.

All pupils in Year 10 complete the Morrisby profile. This is followed up with a one-to-one interview with an independent careers advisor. This interview and accompanying documentation kick-start the process of choosing post-16 options. Pupils are supported in this by their tutor and SHS, as well as the Head of Middle School.

In Year 12, pupils use Unifrog to help them choose post-18 options. Unifrog brings into one place every university course and apprenticeship in the UK, as well as other opportunities, such as School Leaver Programmes, MOOCs and every college at Oxford and Cambridge. Pupils looking at universities have support from the tutor, the school's Higher Education Co-ordinator and the Head of Sixth Form. There are regular visits from university admissions teams. RHS has created a series of workshops run by our independent careers advisor looking at apprenticeship; these run in the Summer Term of Year 12 and into Year 13.

The RHS+ programme in Year 12 contains a six week course which focuses on careers. A variety of areas are covered including curriculum vitae, higher education options and apprenticeships.

All year 13 pupils receive a mock interview from a local employer and have the option to complete an assessment centre simulation. RHS is also a Gold Member of the Suffolk Young Chamber, the youth branch of the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce.

The school holds an annual careers fair in January, along with a regular, wide-ranging series of careers talks in areas of interest to pupils.

E. Monitoring standards and tracking

RHS strives to maintain the highest standards in all aspects of the curriculum. In order to make this possible, RHS employs a diverse set of techniques to monitor standards. The Deputy Head (Academic) is responsible to the Headmaster for the provision of information on standards of attainment and for the formulation of policy in this area. The Deputy Head (Academic) is supported by a member of staff with particular expertise in data tracking.

RHS subscribes to the various baseline-testing services provided by the University of Durham. RHS was one of the first schools to adopt this system. All year 7 pupils sit a baseline test in their first term at RHS. This (Midyis) test gives the school comparative information about the skill level of our pupils compared with a national or independent school sample. It also projects forward to predict likely GCSE results for these pupils.

These predictions can then be compared with the final GCSE results several years later, which gives a measure of the 'value added' by the school. The Year 7 test is backed up by a similar test in Year 9 which also gives GCSE predictions. Finally A level grades can be compared with GCSE results to chart progress through the sixth form (ALIS). The Deputy Head (Academic) reports directly to the governors on the school's public examination performance using comparative data from previous years, independent schools as a whole and our immediate competitors.

The value added data and base-line tests are used to provide a system of Challenge Grades at pupil level and which are set and reviewed by subject teachers in discussion with pupils and Heads of Department. These are monitored by tutors and Heads of Year. These Challenge Grades are a central platform for reporting pupil attainment and progress to parents. These can be used to set academic performance targets at department and school level, as required, for public examination results as set by the Deputy Head (Academic) in consultation with Heads of Department. However, most of this is directly managed by Heads of Department and set within the annual Departmental Self-Review Reports (see below).

All Heads of Department are required to produce a Departmental Self-Review Report which is submitted to the Deputy Head (Academic) and to the Education Sub-Committee of the Governing Body.

Heads of Department are responsible for regularly observing members of their department as well as scrutinising work set, marking and assessment.

Members of staff are annually appraised by line managers in a cycle which lasts all year.

All new members of staff are inducted into the school by a programme which includes academic matters.

F. The Curriculum

The School's Lower School curriculum broadly follows the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3, while the Key Stage 4 courses are in line with national priorities in education.

On joining the School, pupils are placed in mixed ability forms in Years 7-9. These are reviewed regularly to ensure a mix of ability across year groups, but pupils are only moved after careful monitoring and consultation. In Year 7 and 8 there are four parallel forms while in Year 9, there are five parallel forms due to the number of pupils joining in Year 9. There are 66 x 55 minute periods over each fortnight with an A week and B week timetable.

Through an increasingly sophisticated programme to encourage extended and independent learning, the School does all it can to stretch all its pupils from Year 7 to Year 13, not just its scholars and those recognised to be particularly able, gifted and talented in particular areas.

Lower School - Years 7 to 9

The Year 7-9 Curriculum is designed to give pupils breadth of study. In Year 7 (Key Stage 3), the core subjects studied are English, mathematics, science (biology, chemistry and physics), in addition to one modern foreign language from French, German and Spanish. In addition, all pupils study four humanities (geography, history, classical civilisation and religious studies), four creative arts (art, design technology, drama and music) as well as Compass, which covers PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education), critical thinking, digital and computer literacy. All pupils take part in PE (physical education) and swimming and have three games sessions each week, one of which is on a Saturday afternoon.

In Year 8, the curriculum mirrors Year 7 except pupils study two languages from French, German, Latin and Spanish, and do not study classical civilisation.

In Year 9, pupils continue to study the core subjects of English, mathematics, science (biology, chemistry and physics) and pupils choose to either continue with two languages, or take one modern foreign language and classical civilisation. Pupils continue with three humanities (geography, history and religious studies) and choose to study two of the four creative arts (Art, Drama, Design & Technology and Music). Pupils continue to have Compass lessons. All pupils take part in PE (Physical Education) and swimming and have two games sessions each week, one of which is on a Saturday afternoon. In addition, all pupils take part in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF).

Middle School - Years 10 and 11

In Year 10, the start of the GCSE years (Key Stage 4), the curriculum allows pupils to study for GCSEs in 9 subjects. Pupils take the following core subjects: English (most study Language and Literature as separate GCSEs), mathematics, one foreign language (chosen from French, German, Latin and Spanish) and science. Pupils choose either the three separate sciences or Combined Science. Separate science must be selected as one of a pupil's three GCSE option choices.

In addition, three GCSE subjects chosen from geography, history, religious studies, classical civilisation, a second foreign language, separate science, media studies, art, music, drama, design and technology, PE (academic) and business studies. Pupils are encouraged to choose at least one humanity (classical civilisation, geography, history and religious Studies) and one creative subject (art, design and technology, music and drama).

All pupils take part in PE and have two games sessions each week, one of which is on a Saturday afternoon. In addition, all pupils have lessons in PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) and take part in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF).

The Year 11 curriculum follows the same principles as Year 10, except this is the final year of a legacy curriculum where pupils were able to select to study 9 or 10 GCSEs. Pupils therefore have the same options as those in Year 10, except they could choose to study four additional GCSEs rather than three. Those doing separate science selected this as their fourth GCSE option. Pupils who elected to take three additional GCSE subjects (rather than four) also undertake the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL).

All pupils have two games sessions each week, one of which is on a Saturday afternoon. In addition, all pupils have lessons in PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) and may continue to take part in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) or complete service around the school and local community.

Sixth Form - Years 12 and 13

In the Sixth Form, pupils study three Levels, although a BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport is offered in place of an A Level (where previously the school taught A Level PE). Year 12 pupils also study an additional examined subject as an elective from a choice of seven courses.

A Level courses are offered in a wide range of subjects. External examinations in BTEC Sport are taken in the summer term of year 12, but all A Level courses are examined entirely at the end of Year 13.

A Sixth Form enrichment programme – RHS+ and RHSXtra – runs for Year 12 to help prepare them for life beyond school. RHS+ is a carousel-based programme, while RHSXtra is a series of talks and seminars to support pupil learning and wider understanding of the world in which they live. All Year 12 pupils are encouraged to take part in some form of service, such as the Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and supporting younger pupils. Pupils all have two games sessions each week.

In Year 13 pupils continue with their three A Levels and games, and may continue with CCF. Pupils who chose Further Mathematics as their elective continue to study this, and some pupils take up the option of completing an EPQ in this year.