



# Lancing College

Preparatory School at Hove

## Curriculum Policy

2015-2016

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### **Definition of the 'curriculum'**

The 'curriculum' in its generally-agreed sense is that studied during lessons at Lancing College Preparatory School. The academic curriculum refers to the discrete subjects studied by older pupils, and the areas of learning in which our younger pupils are immersed. This is complemented by the extra-curriculum, which encompasses games, activities, clubs, pastoral time, and the abstract but tangible embodiment of the ethos of the School through our everyday conduct.

This policy applies across the school, including the EYFS.

## **Aims of the academic curriculum**

The academic curriculum aims to 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;*

We do this by operating a carefully-planned, full-time, supervised programme of academic and extracurricular education. The range of subjects covered ensures that all the experiences above are given to all pupils.

- (b) *subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with a statement;*

The curriculum is planned in order to do this. Schemes of work are planned in acknowledgement of the National Curriculum, the Common Entrance and Common Academic Scholarship syllabuses and our own knowledge and expectations of pupils. We currently have no pupils with a statement.

- (c) *pupils to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy;*

Our academic curriculum does this across the spectrum of subjects. There are further opportunities to develop these skills outside the classroom in activities such as Debating, Code Club and extracurricular use of the library.

- (d) *where the principal 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;*

Our principal language of instruction is English.

- (e) *where a pupil has a statement, education which fulfils its requirements;*

We do not have any statemented pupils. Our SEN Policy indicates our provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs.

- (f) *personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos;*

Our Personal, Social and Health Education policy and scheme of work indicates the ways in which the study of this subject reflects and articulates the school's aims and ethos. This is true of the wider curriculum (see below).

*(g) appropriate careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education;*

Careers education is catered for through visits and talks from speakers from a variety of backgrounds. Recent years have seen visits from journalists, lawyers, firemen, authors, scientists and religious leaders.

*(h) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;*

We have no pupils above compulsory school age.

*(i) all pupils to have the opportunity to learn and make progress;*

This is central to our ethos. As a non-selective school, opportunities are available to all. Our comprehensive qualitative assessment system ensures that every child has opportunities which are discussed at least twice yearly.

*(j) adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.*

Our curriculum and extra-curriculum are designed with this as an ultimate aim. More immediately, as a preparatory school we work to ensure that pupils are well-prepared for the demands of life at senior school.

The curriculum further aims to support, through the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, the aims of the School, and in particular:

- *To provide an education for boys and girls aged 3 to 13 which inspires a desire for excellence and which enables them to develop independent, searching minds and to realise their full academic potential.*
  - In particular, our curriculum equips pupils with the knowledge and understanding to cope with the most demanding of senior school curricula.
- *To preserve and promote the Christian values which lie at the heart of the foundation of the School.*

- In this way, we hope that a positive approach supports learning. We aim to develop the trust between teacher and pupil in order that pupils feel confident to ask for, and trust, the advice of academic staff.
- *To assist boys and girls in their journey from childhood to adulthood, giving appropriate guidance and responsibilities and preparing them for their departure into an adult world.*
  - We aim to develop the necessary academic and organisational skills for pupils to flourish in a demanding environment.
- *To give each child the opportunity to experience a wide variety of activities which are not part of the examined curriculum and to encourage an interest in sport, music, drama, community service and other pursuits through the provision of excellent facilities and supervision.*
  - We believe that, as pupils leave us at the age of thirteen, raw academic results, while undoubtedly important, only tell part of the story. The self-efficacy of our pupils, and the confidence with which they go on to tackle new and stern challenges, is our paramount aim, which we hope to achieve in a Christian atmosphere of love and mutual support.
- *To provide a safe, welcoming, supportive and tolerant environment in which each pupil feels valued as an individual and, in turn, learns the importance of tolerance and consideration towards others.*
  - We believe that this facilitates the achievement of our other aims.
- *To help each child to realise the importance of contributing to the community, both inside the School and beyond and to ensure that the wider community benefits from the existence of the School.*
  - We aim to exploit academic opportunities to do this, engaging in particular with the Church of the Good Shepherd, Victoria Homes, the Pavilion and Avenue Tennis Club and many other institutions.

## **Organisation of the academic curriculum, and how this helps us fulfil our aims**

### **Subjects**

We follow the EYFS, and thereafter study all National Curriculum subjects, as well as RE. French is introduced from the Nursery, and Latin from Year 6. Senior pupils follow Common Entrance courses in English, Mathematics, Science, French, Latin, History, Geography and RE. This curriculum is enriched by the study of Art, DT, Music, ICT, PE, Games and PSHE, which is delivered in pastoral time as well as through the wider curriculum. See the PSHE Policy for details. In addition, careers education is catered for through visits and talks from speakers from a variety of backgrounds. Recent years have seen visits from journalists, lawyers, firemen, authors, scientists and religious leaders.

## Lesson allocations

There are forty-six thirty-five-minute lessons per week. We have found this to be the optimum lesson length to maintain variety, interest and concentration. Double lessons are often allocated to make maximal use of time.

The allocation of time to different parts of the curriculum is undertaken in consideration of QCA recommendations as well as the particular needs of our pupils in differing age groups, and with particular circumstances. The curriculum aims to make the most purposeful possible use of academic time. Allocation of lessons for younger pupils aims to allow pupils the opportunity to develop key skills while stimulating curiosity and academic interest; in addition to this, lesson allocation for older pupils is made in order to maximise the potential for pupils' successful fulfilment of the demands of Common Entrance or Scholarship examinations.

Lesson allocation in the Prep School is as follows:

| Form | English | Maths | Science | French | Latin | History | Geography | RS | Music | Art | DT | ICT | PE | PSHE | Games |  |
|------|---------|-------|---------|--------|-------|---------|-----------|----|-------|-----|----|-----|----|------|-------|--|
| 3    | 9       | 9     | 3       | 2      | 0     | 2       | 2         | 2  | 2     | 2   | 2  | 1   | 1  | 2    | 4     |  |
| 4    | 9       | 8     | 3       | 2      | 0     | 2       | 2         | 2  | 2     | 2   | 2  | 1   | 1  | 2    | 4     |  |
| 5    | 9       | 9     | 4       | 2      | 0     | 3       | 2         | 3  | 2     | 2   | 2  | 1   | 1  | 2    | 4     |  |
| 6    | 8       | 8     | 4       | 2      | 2     | 3       | 2         | 3  | 2     | 2   | 2  | 1   | 1  | 2    | 4     |  |
| 7    | 6       | 5     | 6       | 4      | 3     | 3       | 3         | 3  | 2     | 2   | 2  | 0*  | 1  | 2    | 4     |  |
| 8    | 6       | 6     | 6       | 4      | 3     | 3       | 3         | 3  | 2     | 2   | 2  | 0   | 1  | 2    | 4     |  |
| 8S   | 6       | 6     | 6       | 4      | 3     | 3       | 3         | 3  | 2     | 2   | 2  | 0   | 1  | 2    | 4     |  |

\*ICT from Form 7 upwards is taught and employed throughout the curriculum.

Time allocation, in hours, in the Pre-Prep is as follows:

| Form | English | Maths | Science | French | History (topic) | Geography (topic) | RS   | Music | Art  | ICT  | PE   | CT   |
|------|---------|-------|---------|--------|-----------------|-------------------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|
| 1    | 7.20    | 2.40  | 1.10    | 0.40   | 0.40            | 0.40              | 0.40 | 1.20  | 1.20 | 0.40 | 1.20 | 0.40 |
| 2    | 7       | 5     | 1.10    | 0.40   | 1               | 1                 | 0.40 | 1.20  | 1.20 | 0.40 | 1.20 | 0.40 |

Our curriculum is supported at all levels by prep. Our aims in setting prep are:

- to inspire enthusiasm for, and to consolidate the delivery in class of, knowledge, understanding or skills according to the relevant schemes of work.
- to instil in pupils good habits of independent study and planning of time.

Further information on the mechanisms of this can be found in our Prep Policy.

## **Pupil groupings and class size policy**

The optimum class size at Lancing College Preparatory School is 20 in a single-form year and 15 in a two-form group. This will only be exceeded under exceptional circumstances in which, in the opinion of the Headmaster, doing so is beneficial both to the needs of the children in that class and to the wider school community. At present there are two mixed-ability forms in all year groups except for Year 2 and 3, and the plan is to extend this model throughout the School. Year 8 is divided into two mixed-ability Common Entrance groups and a Scholarship stream.

We are a small school, which values the intimate knowledge that we gain of every child. As such, Lancing College Preparatory School is committed to mixed-ability groupings in its classes until the differing requirements of examinations in Form 8 prohibit this. Experience has taught us that pupils learn best in an environment in which they are comfortable. The size of our classes, particularly at the senior end of the school, precludes effective differentiation by grouping; furthermore, the long-developed relationships between pupils and their teachers and the small class sizes negate the benefits of this. Differentiation is primarily provided by support, not only from the teacher, but also from our SEN department, as well as by outcome and sometimes by task.

## **Able, Gifted or Talented pupils**

Pupils of high ability are individually differentiated for and supported by teachers who know them well. Pupils who are identified as being exceptionally gifted or talented are catered for with a variety of events such as additional classes or workshops, but we are aware that with such small classes, the possibility of overlooking able pupils is significantly reduced, and 'gifted and talented' schemes often actually reduce opportunity by restricting exciting openings to the most able. We therefore try, where possible and appropriate, to offer enrichment opportunities such as trips and talks to all pupils who may be interested. See A, G and T Policy for more details.

## **Teaching and learning**

The relationship between teacher and pupil is fundamental to a Lancing College Preparatory School education. A pupil will, typically, be taught by the same teacher for a particular subject for a number of years, and the relationship strengthens over time. Teachers, likewise, gain an intimate knowledge of the strengths, interests and learning styles of their pupils. Teaching strategies develop in response to this. Pupils should be taught in an engaging and varied way, but what is most important is that they learn in an individually challenging, yet supportive environment.

Resources are made available in order to achieve this, and each department is allocated a budget to ensure that challenge and support are maintained.

The school is aware that a lively, purposeful and structured learning environment is essential in promoting high standards and good working practices. Displays of pupils' work, stimulus materials and appropriate resources are very important in setting standards and raising expectations. All departments are expected to maintain attractive and appropriate displays in their areas and contribute to displays in public areas of the school. The structure and organisation of the classroom is also an important factor in developing effective working methods and a positive ethos. While this is left to individual teachers and departments, it is expected that classrooms are orderly environments where pupils can work effectively, that adequate resources are provided and are accessible, and that pupils treat all areas of the School with respect.

As a school we aim to embrace new technology where it serves a purpose, for example in the acquisition of two class sets of iPads in 2013; we are aware, however, that technology is an exceptional servant but a poor master.

See also Teaching and Learning Policy.

## Staffing

The School is generously staffed with teachers. A variety of age and background allows new ideas to be complemented by experience. Teachers are qualified appropriately both for their subject and their age.

Teaching staff are supported by a committed and well-qualified SEN department, who support the learning of individual pupils both within and outside of lessons. In the Pre-Prep, teaching assistants support the work of class teachers.

Up to and including Form Four, pupils are taught predominantly by form teachers, with specialist tuition in French, Music, PE and ICT. Pupils in Forms Five and above are largely taught by specialist teachers, with English and Maths splitting between junior and senior specialists.

In addition to upholding the aims of the School, specific expectations of staff with regard to the curriculum are as follows:

- have high expectations of pupils;
- employ a variety of appropriate teaching and learning methods;
- ensure that, wherever possible, students are found means of access to the curriculum and given opportunities to succeed;
- deliver programmes of study which build upon pupils' previous experiences, providing progression and continuity, and which conform to the requirements of the national curriculum and the ISEB curriculum;
- provide work which meets their pupils' needs and aspirations, which offers depth and challenge, and which motivates and inspires them;
- involve the learner in the process of learning, by discussing work, giving regular feedback through assessment and marking, negotiating targets and encouraging pupils to evaluate their own achievements;
- develop pupils' skills to become independent learners;
- encourage, reward and value achievement and effort, both formally and informally, through praise in the learning environment;
- work in partnership with other staff, parents and the wider community to achieve shared goals;
- keep parents regularly and fully informed about the progress and achievements of their sons and daughters.

## **Management**

The Assistant Head, responsible to the Headmaster, is responsible for the leadership and management of the curriculum. Each academic subject is led by a designated member of staff, usually the teacher of this subject to the senior forms, who takes responsibility for the development of departmental policies and schemes of work, as well as the departmental budget and liaison with other members of the department. Support is available for colleagues wishing to participate in a variety of professional training courses.

## **The Role of the Head of Department**

Each academic department has a teacher designated to fulfil the following responsibilities with regard to his or her subject. It should be noted from the outset that being a Head of Department in a 220-strong 3-13 prep school is very different from fulfilling this role in a senior school, and indeed that the role varies greatly from subject to subject, from larger departments involving a large number of colleagues across the age range, such as English, to those which are essentially one-man operations.

The responsibilities of the Head of Department are:

- to take overall charge of the teaching, direction and development of the teaching of the subject throughout the School;
- to promote the teaching of the subject and act as its 'public face' throughout the school;
- to be an exemplary schoolmaster and classroom practitioner, tailoring teaching as appropriate in a preparatory school;
- to co-ordinate the work of colleagues teaching the subject throughout the School;
- to meet with members of the department, where applicable, on as regular a basis as is appropriate and build a sense of mutual co-operation and team spirit;
- to control the departmental budget in order to ensure that the delivery of the subject is well-resourced throughout the school;
- in consultation with other colleagues, to develop and update annually the Policy Document and Scheme of Work for the subject;
- to remain abreast of, and disseminate information to colleagues regarding, curricular and pedagogical developments, interacting especially with IAPS Area 3 and other professional bodies and organisations;

- to liaise and promote effective working links with Heads of Departments of senior schools, especially Lancing College;
- to exploit opportunities to work collaboratively with other departments within the School;
- to exploit links with extracurricular activities.

### **Heads of Department 2015-16**

|           |                     |
|-----------|---------------------|
| English   | Sally Bowdler       |
| Maths     | Peter Gregory       |
| Science   | Carole Cooper       |
| French    | Sandra Barber       |
| Latin     | Tim Peters          |
| History   | Tim Peters          |
| Geography | Lizzie Creedy Smith |
| RS        | Gareth Richards     |
| Art       | Sue Roberts         |
| DT        | Tim Meierdirk       |
| Music     | Alex Farley         |
| PE        | Alun Price          |
| PSHE      | Vicky Fenlon        |

### **Monitoring**

Opportunities for sharing good practice exist, both informally within a mutually supportive common room, and formally through the biennial appraisal system. The curriculum plays an important part in this, as staff set targets pertaining to their own curricular subject and evaluate them. Staff also evaluate the activities of academic departments in the formative feedback forms submitted to the Assistant Head and made available to all staff after every round of examinations.

In the years between appraisals, the Assistant Head undertakes observations of members of the teaching staff in order to evaluate the efficacy of teaching and learning. Attention is paid at this point to the consistency of marking of pupils' work (see Marking Policy).

## **Development**

### **Timetable**

The school operated a teaching day of nine forty-minute lessons until 2012, when a new model of ten thirty-five minute lessons was successfully trialled and introduced for the 2012-3 academic year. The reasons behind this were: a small net increase in teaching time; an appropriate balance between core and foundation subjects; more purposeful teaching; the most effective use of the facilities available (by increasing the opportunity for double lessons.) Feedback from the change was largely positive. Ongoing priorities include the development of facilities and space in order that the timetable continues to work effectively, and the balancing of the demands of the different sections of the school in timetabling.

### **Teaching and learning**

At the centre of our approach to teaching and learning at Lancing Prep is the individual knowledge of every child, deployed by the teacher in selecting particular teaching styles and methods. This we cherish closely. New ideas are tried where it is felt that it in pupils' interests to do so, with the acquisition of class sets of iPads in October 2013 being an example of this. The VLE was gradually introduced in 2013-14 and allowed to grow organically: what was encouraging was the way in which the pupils, particularly the exam candidates, took to the medium as a means of supporting revision in particular. The ongoing priority is to remain abreast of pedagogical developments while retaining the essence of good teaching with the knowledge of every individual at its heart.

### **Staffing**

The school is currently undergoing a period of gentle expansion year on year. We are moving from a one-form entry school to, ultimately, two forms throughout the school with the possibility of three in Years 7 and 8. This was a process that began with the addition of a new form in 2008, with subsequent additions in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015. In the light of this, and of our current size, no two years are the same in terms of staffing.

The recruitment of high-quality staff has long been a priority and remains so. As the school and the roles within it develop, so do its needs in terms of staffing. Significant progress has been made in recent years in ensuring that almost all departments are now led by degree-holding specialists. Specialism has been developed in those teaching the younger years in the Prep School. As our pupil body has developed, it has also been necessary to increase the level of support available to pupils at the lower end of the ability spectrum. In

September 2013 we were able to devote extensive resources towards supporting such pupils through the appointment of a SENCO and a teaching assistant for the Prep School. The ongoing priority is the recruitment and retention of well-qualified and committed staff.

### **Curriculum allocation**

Curriculum allocation is closely monitored and amendments made on a yearly basis in response to quantitative and qualitative feedback. The restructured timetable in 2012 offered an opportunity for a complete rebuild and fresh reallocation of teaching time, with further amendments made in 2013 having run the new timetable for a year. Ongoing priorities include careful monitoring of the requirements of the new National Curriculum.

### **Assessment, recording and tracking**

The school currently uses NFER and MiDYIS testing. This has been the case since 2011 when PiPS was abandoned after a three-year trial which produced inconsistent results on a fairly consistent basis. The introduction of a management system for effort and attainment classifications in 2011 allowed pupils' effort and achievement to be tracked far more closely than had previously been the case, increasing pupil motivation and achievement. Since 2009, teachers have been required to give a qualitative analysis of every set of examination data for senior pupils, which has allowed attention to be targeted towards particular problem areas in exam preparation. The VLE has allowed monitoring to take place of those pupils who have moved on to the Senior School. The Assistant Head regularly reviews effort and attainment classifications of former pupils at Lancing College, passing on good news to interested staff but also identifying where particular trends occur which may reflect areas for development at the Prep School. The 2015 ISI inspection noted the robustness of the tracking of individual pupils as a great strength.

We have monitored closely the development of alternatives and complements to Common Entrance, but remain committed to the latter as it is favoured by the destination schools of the vast majority of our pupils. We shall continue to monitor this in the future.

### **Training and research**

The expectation is that teaching staff are fully abreast of the latest educational and pedagogical developments, while remaining judicious in their use and particularly mindful that much educational research concerns an audience quite different from the one found in a small preparatory school. An INSET budget is deployed in response to this. Over £5000 was spent in 2013-14 on staff training. Members of the teaching staff have in recent years taken on senior positions in SATIPS and the Association of Science Education, meaning

that Lancing Prep staff have taken a prominent role in educational discourse on a national level. The ongoing priority is to maintain and develop this profile.

## **References to further policies**

The following policies provide information relevant to the academic curriculum:

- Prep policy
- Assessment policy
- SEN policy
- Marking policy
- Rewards and sanctions
- Teaching and Learning policy
- Staff handbook

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Head, in consultation with academic staff. The last review was July 2015 and the next will be July 2016.