

CURRICULUM POLICY

At Prior's Field the curriculum comprises all that contributes to the successful, confident learning of the individual, including both formal academic opportunities and those offered through subject related co-curricular activities.

The curriculum gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. In addition, it enables the development of personal and social skills, competence in communication, literacy, ICT and numeracy through all areas and across the whole school.

The aims of the school are underpinned by and reflected in a curriculum which is based on equality of opportunity, where each individual is valued and where the love of learning will thrive so that all pupils make progress and gain a sense of achievement from the learning process. The curriculum also includes activities planned to actively promote the social, moral, spiritual, cultural [SMSC] development of all its pupils and to support the aims of the PSHE programme.

Prior's Field aims to deliver its curriculum in a stimulating and challenging way that teaches self-discipline and a sense of responsibility, and which promotes independent learning and the value of collaboration in teamwork. Links with the local community and beyond are fostered to widen horizons and demonstrate the relevance of the curriculum to everyday life.

Religious Studies is available to all pupils. Prior's Field is non-denominational and the diversity of pupils and staff of all beliefs or none, is respected and celebrated through assemblies and cultural events.

At Prior's Field, all students are entitled to a curriculum which is characterised by:

Breadth

Pupils are selected on the basis of an entrance examination, school report and reference. The norm is that all pupils continue into Higher and Further education when they leave.

Prior's Field's curriculum incorporates and enriches the National Curriculum KS3 to KS4. It is flexible and able to respond to changes in Government Policy related to curriculum issues. There are opportunities to study two Modern Foreign Languages, engage in a wide range of sporting, artistic and creative activities and to learn musical instruments. ICT is taught discretely and used extensively throughout the curriculum.

At KS3 all pupils follow a broad programme of study: core subjects [English, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, French, Spanish or Latin], along with History, Geography, Religious Studies, PE, Drama, Art, Music, Design Technology, Textiles, Food Technology and ICT are taught in every year. In addition, all pupils have careers education as part of a wider PSHE provision.

At KS4, in addition to core subjects, including Dual and Triple Science, the expectation is that most pupils will continue with at least one modern foreign language. A wide range of optional subjects is also available, in addition to individual and group learning support lessons. Pupils submit 3 free choices to the school each year from which option blocks are created annually. Adjustments to this curriculum may be made to meet individual learning needs and

to support Tennis Academy pupils. Optional GCSE subjects cover the humanities, creative/performing arts, PE and technologies.

The post-16 programme of studies includes a core curriculum of Careers Education, Physical Education, Learning for Life, a programme of academic lectures and workshops and citizenship/leadership/community service opportunities. Pupils submit preferences for A level subjects which are used to generate five option blocks from which pupils confirm their choices. Most pupils study 3 A level subjects and an EPQ but decisions are made according to individual needs and abilities.

Balance

It is the policy of Prior's Field to offer equality of access to all subjects. We aim to present a curriculum which incorporates the development of knowledge; the understanding of concepts; the acquisition of skills and the ability to apply these in a variety of circumstances, through the exercise of independent thought and by framing opinions based on evidence and sound judgement. Pupils have an open choice from a wide range of subjects in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5. Each pupil is advised when making these choices, to ensure a balanced programme of study suited to their needs, strengths and future aspirations. The timetable is built around their choices to ensure that each pupil is able to pursue her preferences and develop her aptitudes. The commitment of the school to offering a tailored approach is demonstrated in the generous staffing allocated to run courses for small numbers of students. In addition to careers education, pupils and parents are invited to Third Year Options Evenings and Sixth Form Open Evenings. Detailed option information booklets are provided for each pupil and her parents and information evenings for girls and parents are held at the beginning of KS4 and the lower sixth.

Coherence

We embrace those deductive and inductive logical and creative processes that underpin all areas of learning and aim to ensure that these do not appear unconnected, but are perceived by pupils and teachers as contributing to overall progress and achievement. In this way, our goal is to encourage pupils to identify cross-curricular links and make associations between ideas.

Relevance

We take account of the previous learning of pupils and their readiness for new experiences. As a school, we also ensure that the curriculum plays a significant role in preparing the pupils for the next stage in their education and for life beyond school as students, employees and citizens.

Challenge

We stimulate and encourage wide ranging and independent learning to provide a framework of skills for future progress. Use is made of prior achievement, 'value-added' data and professional judgement to ensure that individual needs are met, appropriate challenge provided and progress tracked.

Differentiation

The diversity of learning needs is acknowledged in departmental schemes of work and lesson plans. These are created to present the curriculum through a variety of teaching methods using a range of resources. Regular review of the schemes of work is carried out to introduce fresh approaches to assessment techniques and to ensure the pursuit of excellence in the delivery of the curriculum. The school also uses setting and other means of grouping pupils to facilitate differentiation, as appropriate.

Individual Learning Needs

The school has a policy of recognising and catering for individual educational needs. It sets out for parents what help the school can offer in addition to the taught curriculum. A team of staff ensures that all teachers are supported in making provision for any exceptionally able pupils. Those attending Prior's Field on academic scholarships are overseen by academic staff and relevant Heads of Department.

In line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and current SEN legislation, including the 2014 Code of Practice, the needs of any pupils with special educational needs, including any with Education, Health and Care plans [EHC plans], are co-ordinated by the Head of Learning Support. Teaching staff are expected to make special provision for these pupils in their lesson planning and to address their needs by using appropriate resources. Teaching strategies are selected to both challenge the very able and to help pupils to manage and overcome any learning difficulties. Detailed records of pupils with special learning difficulties and disabilities are kept and made available centrally to all staff across the school. Prior's Field also provides individual and group support for those for whom English is an additional language. All pupils receiving additional learning support or EAL tuition have individual educational plans [IEP plans] which are monitored and evaluated regularly by the Head of Learning Support, in conjunction with the pupils themselves, their parents and teachers. See also, policies on Learning Support, EAL and Equal Opportunities.

Continuity

Effective continuity between phases of the school is considered to be a vital element in curriculum management. Regular consultation between teachers in various Key Stages and the exchange of up-to-date data ensure that, as they move through the school, pupils meet fresh stimulation as they build on their prior attainment and achievements. There is also a detailed handover between tutors and Year Team Leaders. Whilst reinforcement is embedded in the schemes of work, unnecessary repetition is avoided through close collaboration, consultation.

Homework

Heads of Department, Form Tutors and Year Team Leaders monitor to ensure that appropriate homework is set and marked regularly to support and reinforce work covered in class. It also provides an opportunity for the development of research and independent learning skills. There is a high expectation that this work is completed in full and on time. Parents can become involved in managing their daughter's progress by overseeing this work and by communicating any difficulties to their daughter's form tutor through the pupil planners or by email. A variety of assessment methods are regularly used. See also the school's policy on Assessment, Reporting and Marking.

Careers

The careers programme includes opportunities for work-related learning and careers education is featured, as appropriate, within the PSHEE programme. Individual pupil support and guidance is also provided through national schemes, the Careers Department and through tutors. The aim is to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life through education and the broadening of horizons. It is also to ensure that those moving on to Further and Higher Education courses are well informed and well prepared for the next stage. The Head of Careers plays a key role in advising pupils on option choices, working closely with them, tutors and Year Team Leaders, in particular the Head of Upper Sixth on university applications. See also the Work Related Learning Policy.

Teaching and Learning

Prior's Field places emphasis on the notion that teaching and learning processes are as significant as curriculum content in determining student progress and achievement. The School aims to:

- promote the view that learning should be experienced as something which is enjoyable, engaging, rewarding and confidence building. It also prepares pupils for the next stages: further education and future careers.
- regard monitoring and assessment as an integral and valuable part of the learning process, in order to diagnose difficulties, chart progress and encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and progress.

See also the Assessment Policy.

All staff share responsibility for delivering the Curriculum. It is the responsibility of each Head of Department to ensure that schemes of work are produced and regularly updated.

Education and Welfare Committee Reviewed: Summer 2018

Date of next review: 1 May 2019