



Curriculum Policy

Reviewed August 2024

Next Review August 2025

Reviewed by Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) and Head of Junior School

We offer a broad and balanced curriculum which provides continuity and progression from Year 3 through to Upper Sixth. We aim to create confident, independent, and successful young women who are ready to make a difference to the workplace of the twenty first century. As an International Baccalaureate World School we believe wholeheartedly in the philosophical underpinnings of the IB: to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who are motivated to succeed. We use this philosophy to inform our curriculum planning at all stages of learning.

In order to achieve continuity and progression we use a shared language when identifying key features of our curriculum, and this is articulated via the learner profile (please see Appendix A for further detail) The learner profile identifies ten attributes that we seek to develop in the students, these are being: Knowledgeable, Inquirers, Open-Minded, Caring, Risk Takers, Communicators, Thinkers, Balanced, Principled and Reflective.

Aims

- Ensure the effective development of the learner profile in all members of the school community
- Ensure equitable access to all areas of the curriculum
- Ensure the curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of all students, enabling them to achieve their potential and it taking into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all students, including those students with an EHC plan, those for whom English is an additional Language and those identified as being able, gifted and talented (please see Learning Support Policy, Challenge and Extend Policy and English as an Additional Language Policy for further details)
- Encourage participation in co-curricular activities to develop team-work and leadership skills
- Ensure that the curriculum 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 (for more details see the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy and the Personal, Social, Health Education Policy)
- Teaching must not undermine or discriminate against students contrary to the Equality Act, that is, on the basis of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- Provide guidance for making choices in education and in life
- Ensure students are taught personal, social and health education (including Relationships and Sex Education)
- Encourage students to have high expectations of themselves
- Provide a curriculum that gives guidance to students to adjust their behaviours in order to reduce risks, including the safe use of electronic equipment and the internet in an age appropriate manner. Ensure students understand the risks posed by adults or young people, who use the internet and social media to bully, groom or abuse other people, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Provide access to up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner and

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enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options that helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential (for more details see the Careers Policy)

Implementation

Curriculum Planning

Curriculum reviews at departmental and whole school levels are carried out regularly to ensure that to ensure that students receive a balanced curriculum experience as they progress through the school. These reviews are shared with all key stakeholders and involve the views of staff, students, parents and governors. Alongside internal reviews, training and professional development opportunities are provided for all staff to enhance delivery of the curriculum and to keep teachers informed of current initiatives and developments relating to their subject area. Recruitment and performance management procedures ensure teachers maintain their capacity to deliver a bold and dynamic curriculum.

Members of staff performing middle management roles are central to the effective implementation of our curriculum. It is their role to ensure that key elements of the learner profile, as identified through their Unit Planners (Schemes of Work), are delivering effective learning outcomes for the students. Middle Leaders provide links to the whole school delivery of the curriculum via the annual strategic development planning cycle, that is designed to provide a robust and effective dialogue between Middle and Senior Leaders. The planning cycle also enables governors to maintain a direct overview of the curriculum delivery and whole school direction. The School Development Plan is prepared in the Summer Term and this then informs Middle Leaders to prepare an annual Department Development Plan for the beginning of the Autumn Term. The Department and School Development Plans then inform the individual PDR process for each member of teaching staff with the associated line management structures.

Biennial Department Strategy Reviews provide a longer-term process for reflecting and developing the curriculum, and whilst working in conjunction with the annual development planning process, ensure that student voice and robust evidence gathering is informing the decision making at all levels of curriculum planning. More details of this process can be found in the Teaching and Learning Policy.

Student Selection

Bedford Girls' School is an academically selective school and all the students we accept into the school have demonstrated their ability to cope successfully with the anticipated requirements of this academic curriculum and the pace of the work. The school routinely provides additional support for students who have specific learning requirements. The school provides additional support for students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities and, where the need for special provision arises, a student's interests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Once a girl is accepted into the school, and provided that she can benefit from the type of education we offer, the school will work with her family to ensure that any particular learning needs are met.

Student Grouping

Decisions about student grouping are normally made at department level and, where timetabling flexibility exists, there is a mix of tutor group teaching and ability set groups. Where sets exist, the criteria for movement between them are explained to parents and students. Traditionally Mathematics set teaching groups by ability from Year 8 upwards, and there is an element of streaming in Biology, Chemistry and Physics at Key Stage Four. This enables the students to work at speeds at which they are comfortable at. The groups are not fixed, and after a major assessment the students can go up or down a group. Parents are informed of all set movements.

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A comprehensive Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum is followed by students in Years 3 – Upper Sixth. The schemes of work include a section on careers education at the appropriate time. Students in Lower Sixth follow a programme which includes a half term module specifically devoted to Higher Education options. In the Sixth Form it is the role of the Tutor to guide their tutees through the process of applying to university, or employment in conjunction with the support of the Careers Department (The Bridge) (further details of this can be found in the Careers Policy).

The co-curricular programme is designed to provide opportunities across the curriculum and age range of students. Each department is encouraged to seek experiences beyond the classroom and this is actively encouraged through the allowance of time off the directed timetable for each subject in each year group (1 day per academic year). The co-curricular programme also provides many opportunities to challenge and extend students with particular abilities.

The trips and visits programme is compiled to ensure the full development of the learner via a staged approach over the different key stages. Residential trips are offered to each year group with a focus on providing experiences for the development of such learning characteristics as resilience and risk taking, as well as direct links to the academic curriculum. Balance is planned in to the programme to ensure that as the students progress through the school they have a rich and varied set of experiences beyond the curriculum and campus.

Guidance

Appropriate and detailed guidance is offered to students throughout their school career. Depending on the age of a girl, she will normally be guided by her Form Tutor, subject teachers or Head of Careers. Additionally, Heads of Year and Heads of Department together with the Assistant Heads, the Senior Deputy Head and the Headmistress are also available to advise individual students or groups of students.

Written information is prepared for the guidance of students, teachers and parents at stages when major decisions have to be made. Documents available and regularly updated include:

- Guide to Life at BGS
- (I)GCSE Course information booklet
- Sixth Form Course Guides (A Level and IBDP)

Additional guidance is provided to help prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life through the following curricular programmes:

- Personal, Health and Social Education in Years 7 – Upper Sixth incorporating Careers Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- Taught Careers Education lessons in Lower Sixth
- Timetabled tutorials with their Sixth Form Tutor followed by as many further meetings as are necessary
- Specialist careers evenings where we look at training, education and different occupations beyond school

Additionally, one-topic information events intended to inform students and parents together are routinely held in respect of:

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- Information Evening for parents of pupils joining Years 3 – 6
- Autumn Term - Information Afternoons for Years 3 - 6
- Autumn Term - Parents' Information Evenings for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and Lower Sixth
- Choosing GCSE courses (Year 9)
- Sixth Form courses (Year 11 and prospective external candidates at Sixth Form Information Evening)
- IB Experiential Learning Day for Years 7 - 10
- IB Information Evening
- University Entrance (Lower Sixth at the Higher Education Information Evening)
- Themed Careers' Evenings (Years 10 – Upper Sixth)
- Curriculum Conversations

Junior School

Curriculum

Bedford Girls' School Junior School is fully verified to teach the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP). As a school already in tune with the philosophy and practices of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in the Sixth Form, this is an opportunity to further develop our common philosophy across the school through a commitment to a high-quality, challenging, international education.

The Junior School Curriculum places the student at the centre of learning. The curriculum is designed to ensure students grow and progress into confident, enthusiastic and independent learners who use the attributes of the IB Learner Profile in the pursuit of personal knowledge and understanding. The PYP framework for our Junior School curriculum aims to reach far beyond intellectual development and academic success. The curriculum addresses students' academic, social and emotional well-being through a framework of knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action that equip students for successful lives now and in the future.

There are six subject areas in the Junior School curriculum:

- Language (English and MfL)
- Mathematics
- Science
- Humanities
- Arts
- Personal, Social and Physical Education

Language (English) and Mathematics are learnt in daily lessons with Junior School class teachers who are experts in the early acquisition of these subjects. Developing a strong set of skills in literacy and numeracy are vital for unlocking potential across all subject areas.

Learning in Science, Humanities, Arts and Personal, Social and Physical Education takes place through six trans disciplinary themes, taught through half termly Units of Inquiry. The trans disciplinary themes are of global significance and provide students with the opportunity to incorporate local and global issues, making links beyond the confines of learning within separate subject areas. Themes are re-visited every year to build on

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prior knowledge and understanding and to provide a more immersive experience.

The six trans disciplinary themes are:

- Who We Are
- Where We Are In Place and Time
- How We Express Ourselves
- How We Organise Ourselves
- Sharing The Planet

The Junior School curriculum is enhanced through specialist taught classes which are connected to each Unit of Inquiry. Throughout Years 3-5 students receive specialist Music and Dance lessons. Additionally, the language experience is broadened with specialist Spanish lessons and Physical Education is also taught by specialist teachers. In Year 6, learning in Science, Drama and DT are also supported through specialist lessons. French, German and Latin are introduced by specialist language teachers in Year 6, which are organized in a rotation with Spanish lessons.

Curriculum enrichment opportunities

A wide range of enrichment activities supplement the timetabled curriculum available to all students. Regular trips and activities are planned across all year groups to tie in with and support their classroom-based learning experiences and there are also visits of guest speakers at regular intervals throughout the year. Regular themed days include: Book Week, National Poetry Day, STEM Week and Anti-Bullying Week. As the curriculum is constantly evolving, trips and visits change year on year to reflect that. Students in Years 3 - 6 have an opportunity to take part in residential visits planned to reflect their growing independence and skills.

Classroom Support

The delivery of the curriculum in class is often supported by Teaching Assistants who work alongside individual students and take small groups to ensure that all students, regardless of their ability, have access to a wide and varied curriculum.

Student Grouping

Students work in mixed ability groups within class for much of the time. However, teaching and learning is adapted to suit the needs of individuals and targeted teaching take place throughout the Junior School with a great emphasis on personalised learning.

Senior School Curriculum

The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 builds on the students' previous learning experiences, providing them with the opportunity to study a range of subjects that ensures a balanced delivery of the Learner Profile. In Years 7 and 8, pupils make the transition from the more thematic learning of the primary years into specialist single subjects. The curriculum gives students experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.

The curriculum for both year groups includes English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, Philosophy, Religion and Ethics, two modern foreign languages chosen from French, German or Spanish, Drama, Music, Dance, Computing and Information Systems, Games, Art, Design Technology, Food and Nutrition, Textiles and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). In Year 7 students follow a course in

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Classics and in Year 8 this is replaced with Latin.

Year 9

Year 9 is viewed a vital year to develop depth in learning and independence of thought. Therefore, a greater element of choice is introduced into the curriculum to allow for time to focus on the creative arts and classics. Students are taught English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, MFL, Geography, History, Philosophy and Religion, Games and PSHE. Political Science is introduced as a new subject and provides a vital opportunity to develop the students as balanced and open-minded learners with an international mindset.

To allow for greater depth and timetable space, students then choose three subjects from the following: Art, Classics, Computer Science, Design Technology, Drama, Food and Nutrition, Latin, MFL (one choice from French, German, and Spanish in addition to the chosen core MFL subject), Music, and Textiles. This process also helps prepare students for the more significant set of choices made at Key Stage 4.

GCSE

In Years 10 and 11 students will take IGCSEs in English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and at least one modern foreign language (French, German or Spanish). Students can then choose another three GCSE subjects from a wide range listed below, one of which should be a humanities subject:

Art	Food and Nutrition	Music
Computer Science	Geography	Physical Education
Design and Technology	History (IGCSE)	Religious Studies (IGCSE)
Drama	Latin	Textile Design

Additional core subjects which do not lead to an external examination but which all students study are Philosophy and Ethics, Games and Personal, Social and Health Education (which includes Careers Education and Relationships and Sex Education).

When students enter the Sixth Form they will be able to follow either a course leading to A Levels or a course leading to the International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB). Whichever route students choose to take they will all have Games lessons, PSHE lessons and will be expected to take part in the CAS (Creativity, Action and Service) programme.

For the A Level programme students can choose from three of the following subjects: Art, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Design Technology, Drama and Theatre Studies, Economics, English Language, English Literature, French, Further Mathematics, Geography, German, Government and Politics, History, Latin, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Spanish and Textiles. In addition to this, all students engage in the Extended Project Qualification in Year 12.

For the IB course students must choose six subjects, one from each of six groups as well as the compulsory Theory of Knowledge course. Three subjects will be studied at Standard Level and three at Higher Level. One Subject must be chosen from each of Groups 1 to 5 with the sixth subject chosen from any of Groups 1 to 6.

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Subjects currently offered are:

Group 1: English

Group 2: French, German, Spanish, Latin, Ab Initio Italian

Group 3: History, Geography, Economics, Philosophy

Group 4: Biology, Chemistry, Physics

Group 5: Mathematics

Group 6: Visual Arts, Music, Theatre

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Appendix A – Bedford Girls' School Learner Profile

Inquirers	We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry. We know how to research, predict, identify variables, question and work effectively on open ended tasks. We have enthusiasm, motivation and drive, knowing how to learn independently and with others.
Knowledgeable	We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We can both understand and apply theory to a range of contexts with rigour and attention to detail. We can assess the validity of sources of knowledge and recognise that spiritual understanding is also knowledge. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.
Thinkers	We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex issues. We can analyse using sequential thought to solve problems. We can use a framework of thinking to make reasoned argument. We use the design process to inspire creative thought in the development of ideas. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
Communicators	We express ourselves confidently, clearly and creatively and show mastery in listening, reading, speaking and writing. We understand the wide array of ways in which we can communicate our thoughts, feelings and ideas in the expressive arts and the written and spoken word. We appreciate and utilise a range of methods to present data. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups when debating and discussing ideas.
Principled	We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We understand the consequences of our actions and embrace the principles of restorative justice. We listen carefully to the opinions of others and ensure that we represent our ideas fairly. We understand how our use of social media and our understanding of working and living in a safe environment is the responsibility of everyone.
Open-Minded	We seek and evaluate a range of points of view and as a result broaden our cultural horizons. We see imagination, alongside knowledge and analysis, as being an integral part of shaping ideas. In developing an argument we take care to listen to the opinions of others and use this as an important part of collaborative learning. We critically appreciate the values and traditions of others, and know that we can grow from the experience.
Caring	We show empathy, compassion and respect. Through a commitment to service we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others. We show respect and sensitivity when assessing the work of others, and look to support each other when working in a team.
Risk Takers	We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenge and change. We seek to work beyond our comfort zones, and use innovation and an independence of thought to cope with failure. We are bold in our decision making, enjoy taking new approaches to learning and are happy to apply familiar rules to unfamiliar contexts. We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas.
Balanced	We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives (intellectual, physical, and emotional) to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We approach decisions using logical judgement, weighing of opinion and ensure we use a variety of sources before reaching a conclusion. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
Reflective	We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development. We value the process of constructive criticism from and to others. We gain confidence from developing an awareness of ourselves whilst thoughtfully considering the world with our own ideas and experience.

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