

2A Curriculum Policy

This Policy applies to the whole school and is published to staff, pupils and parents

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Longridge Towers School is a 3 – 19 years school. Whilst understanding that in legal terms, in Scotland a young person is deemed an adult at 16 and in England an adult at 18, the following policy aides the School in the managing of appropriate behaviour and its duties in safeguarding all members of the School community. Therefore, for the purpose of clarity, the term pupil in this context encompasses those who are registered to attend classes regardless of age and legal status as an adult. We expect all pupils to abide by our school rules and policies, irrespective of their age.

Purpose

Longridge is a School where everyone can excel. We provide a holistic education where our pupils can fulfil their potential, as confident, independent, and life-long learners.

Aims

The curriculum at Longridge Towers School has been drawn up in accordance with the whole school aims, detailed in the School Mission Statement:

We are committed to delivering the following aims:

- Excellence in Education - improving the outcomes for pupils to fulfil potential
- Excellence in Care - sustaining an excellent level of pastoral care for our pupils
- Care for our People - developing our team of professionals
- Grow and Develop our School - increasing pupil numbers
- Invest our Time and Money wisely - Improving our systems and environment

These aims articulate the School's vision and focus to secure an outstanding future.

The curriculum is designed to give pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education. Where pupils are below compulsory school age, the school delivers a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development, as well as their communication and language skills. Where pupils are above compulsory school age, the school delivers a programme of activities that is appropriate to their needs. In this way, all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress, and prepare effectively for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

Our curriculum also promotes equal opportunities for all, regardless of age, ability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexuality or disability. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about these characteristics in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons (see also separate section below).

This is achieved by:

- Using effective teaching and learning strategies that encourage high aspirations and seek to realise the potential of each child.
- Employing a variety of teaching approaches that suits the needs of different students. To match tasks to students and balance the challenge with likelihood of success for each student.
- Delivering subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including any pupils with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Personal Learning Plan (PLP).
- Where a pupil has an EHCP or IEP/PLP, providing education which fulfils his/her requirements.
- Providing personal, social, health and economic education which reflect the School's aims and ethos.
- Giving appropriate careers guidance for pupils in the Senior School.

Curriculum Administration

In the Senior School, there is a Curriculum Committee comprising representatives from each 'faculty area'. These have the responsibility of liaising with other staff as appropriate and overseeing curriculum development and resources in their subject areas. This function is carried by subject leaders in the Junior Department, with each subject being coordinated by an individual member of staff.

Monitoring of staff performance and subject/departmental management is achieved within the staff review process, for which there is a separate policy.

Key Features of the Academic Curriculum

Throughout the school, there are a number of key issues that are addressed through the academic curriculum. These are identified in schemes of work and/or medium-term plans as distinct, colour coded themes as follows:

1. Differentiation - activities/tasks/areas for support and challenge etc. - red
2. Communication/literacy - green
3. ICT - pupil opportunities - dark blue

4. Fundamental British Values - gold
5. Numeracy - pink
6. Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) - light blue

Opportunities for outdoor learning (OL) and problem solving (PS) are also being identified on Schemes of Work (SoW) and Medium-Term Plans (MTP) as they are updated.

Each of these concepts should permeate the taught curriculum and feature regularly in lesson planning. It is appreciated that some themes will occur repeatedly in particular subjects, such as communication in languages and SMSC in PSHE. However, occasions to address all these areas should be identified wherever possible. Differentiation and adaptive learning opportunities should routinely be considered in lesson planning, to include support and challenge for pupils of all abilities. As a result, we expect pupils to acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills.

The curriculum takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. It supports 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 pupils in the Senior School, the curriculum includes up-to-date careers guidance that is impartial, enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

Curriculum Development

The content of the curriculum is reviewed annually. New specifications are developed and introduced by individual departments/faculties and schemes of work amended accordingly.

There is an appraisal of the needs of each cohort entering the Sixth Form to assess whether any appropriate vocational qualifications should be offered alongside A-levels.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Curriculum Committee are mindful of the implications of changes in the format and assessment of GCSEs and A-levels. At A-level students need not sit AS examinations except by individual agreement. Instead they take rigorous internal examinations in their chosen subjects at the end of the Lower Sixth. This provides an objective measurement of their progress, concrete evidence of achievement for university applications and an opportunity for focused work in the summer break if improvement is required. The curriculum, assessment procedures and subject choices are considered annually, to ensure that school policy takes account of curriculum developments and the needs of each individual group of students, as well as innovation in teaching and learning practices.

Individualised Learning

Setting of Pupils

This occurs in certain situations where it is deemed to be beneficial to the pupils and can be facilitated within the timetable. Setting allows pupils of similar abilities to be taught together, enabling them to move at a more appropriate pace. It also allows teaching group size to be adjusted in favour of those pupils who require more individual attention.

Academically more able

The needs of the academically most able pupils are met through a range of strategies, including careful in-class adaptive teaching, which should include an appropriate level of cognitive challenge. There are also activities such as Mathematics Challenges and other external competitions and pursuits that provide a high level of intellectual stimulus. The wide variety of school clubs, particularly music, sport, chess, science and the arts, allow pupils the opportunities to excel in many different areas and be educated in a rich and stimulating environment. Highly able pupils may also have an individual, or group learning plan.

Learning Support

All pupils have a right to equal access to the curriculum. A number of pupils, however, require additional support to make the expected academic progress. Some of these pupils have been identified as having a specific learning difficulty, while others may simply have gaps in their knowledge, medical needs, or low

confidence and require some extra help. All pupils with special educational needs are given targeted support. This is often in the form of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) / Personal Learning Plan (PLP) or an Education Health & Care Plan which outlines support specific to their needs. Both parents and pupils are involved from the outset in the development of PLPs/IEPs, which are written by one of the schools SENDCos, with input from teaching staff and reviewed regularly. We also ensure that these pupils have full access to the school's curriculum. Some pupils without PLPs/IEPs are placed into support groups and/or are specifically monitored by staff. Opportunities to discuss other pupils causing concern are given at staff meetings and the support timetable is regularly amended to cater for the changing needs of the pupils within the school. Where a pupil has an Education Health & Care Plan, the school provides education which fulfils their requirements.

The curriculum at Longridge is pupil-centred and intended to provide every pupil with the best possible experience possible. We will tailor our offering to individual needs where feasible, for example by providing extra support if needed (such as learning support in place of a GCSE option or a language at KS3), or enabling extra learning within or outside of the regular curriculum (such as GCSE Further Maths or Statistics, or the study of a third language at KS3).

GCSE Option Choices

In addition to the core subjects, pupils usually choose four optional subjects at GCSE. In consultation with the Learning Support department, some pupils may follow only three (or occasionally two) options with individual targeted support during the blank periods. This will allow for consolidation of skills, deeper study and the development of positive attitudes to learning. By taking fewer GCSEs overall, it is anticipated that better progress will be made in the remaining subjects.

Liaison between Senior School, the Junior Department and the Early Years Department

There is frequent and regular contact, at all levels, to ensure that pupils have a smooth transition from one area of the School to the next and that pupil's benefit from continuity in curriculum approach. Liaison between the departments includes the following:

- Headmaster's regular visits to the Junior Department
- Senior Leadership Team and Senior Academic Team Meetings (weekly)
- Heads of Faculty and Pastoral Care Tracking meetings (once per term for each senior form).
- Regular meetings between the Co-Heads of the Junior Department and the Early Years staff
- Mutual lesson observations
- Shared teaching, for example in Games/PE, Art and Music, Junior pupils may have some lessons taught by Senior School staff within the main building and so become familiar and comfortable with its layout and staff
- As part of their transition to Form 1, some lessons (Maths and Geography) are taught by Junior Department specialists
- Cross-curricular days with activities spread across key stages
- Whole school staff have some shared staff-meetings and whole school in-service training days
- End of year transition meetings in the Junior Department, and Junior-Senior School transition meetings, where Junior staff meet with Head of Year for Forms 1 and 2

Homework

Regular homework is a valuable aspect of the learning process and contributes to the development of sound study habits. It encourages pupils to develop the habit of independent study and promotes application and self-discipline. It also presents a regular opportunity to reinforce skills, which have been learnt in the classroom. Homework has a valuable role to play in involving parents in their children's learning, allowing them to show interest and give support where necessary.

Literacy and Numeracy

The focus of literacy lessons is concerned with developing pupils' communication skills and increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, reading and writing. If a pupil (EAL) enters the school for whom English is not their first language then support will be provided in written and spoken English.

We aim to develop pupils' knowledge, enjoyment and understanding of mathematics in a variety of ways, including practical activity, exploration and discussion.

In the Junior Department, specific literacy and numeracy skills are identified in long term planning, which ensures that appropriate subject matter is taught and there is progression in the pupils' learning across the year groups. All Junior pupils have the opportunity to develop core skills of spelling, mental arithmetic and handwriting. In KS1 pupils follow the Read Write Inc. phonics scheme of work. In Key Stage 2 the children have a tailored Key Skills lesson three times each week (and follow Read Write Inc. spelling scheme) in addition to daily Mathematics and English lessons.

Literacy and numeracy skills are further developed in the Senior School, both via English and Maths lessons, as well as through identifying key topics in the wider curriculum. Both literacy and numeracy are key themes identified in departmental schemes of work/medium term plans (see above).

The Role of Parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role in supporting their children in school, which they are actively encouraged to do at every available opportunity, for example in monitoring homework tasks or becoming involved in their children's reading. Parents are always welcome to make an appointment to come into school to discuss any concerns or ideas.

In addition, we aim to inform and involve parents through the following:

- Staff e-mail addresses are available to parents
- Use of the Homework Diary/Planner as channel of communication is encouraged
- Guardian access to weekly Google Classroom updates for Forms 1-3
- Diaries and Learning Journeys in Early Years
- Weekly newsletters
- A class meeting in the first half of the Michaelmas Term for each year group (Junior Department)
- Parents' Evenings at least once a year.
- A formal report at least twice every year.
- Transition information and meetings for parents of pupils in Reception, Year 6, Year 9 and Year 11 (Form 3 and Form 5).
- Prize giving at the end of the year.

Beyond the Classroom

In addition to the regular taught curriculum, Longridge Towers School provides pupils with numerous further opportunities to enhance their educational experience:

Enrichment – There is an extensive enrichment programme which is designed to complement and enrich the experience of pupils in the school. Enrichment usually takes place at the end of the main school day, between 3.50 and 4.45pm, although some events may also happen at lunch time.

All pupils are actively encouraged to participate in the enrichment programme. If they are interested in sport, music, art or drama, there are many opportunities to become involved. They may also wish to attend sessions of general interest such as Astronomy, Book Club, Adventure Service Challenge/ Duke of Edinburgh Awards, or join a curriculum-based activity like Spanish or Latin. A supervised homework club option is also available for those who wish to get on with academic work, whilst having access to staff and resources if needed. Enrichment is also an opportunity for pupils to try something different for a period of time or develop new interests.

Service to Others – We seek to develop the pupils’ sense of responsibility through various posts of office within the school. The pupils run their own ‘School Council’ in both the Junior and Senior departments. There are House Captains and prefects in both the Junior and Senior departments, and it is hoped that all pupils will be actively involved in many different areas of school life. We encourage the pupils to be good citizens through taking initiative and planning fund raising for various charities throughout the year. In addition, pupils organise and run stalls at the annual ‘Christmas Fair’. Many Sixth Form students are actively involved in supporting Junior Department activities and events; there is an expectation that Sixth formers participate in some type of community service either within or outside of school.

Trips and Visits – We aim to provide pupils with a wealth of first-hand experiences, and we place a strong emphasis on educational visits, visitors to school and residential trips. We actively encourage speakers to come into school to discuss aspects of either their working or cultural life, e.g. dentists, the services, authors or people from different religious backgrounds. We believe that the pupils gain from these experiences as it gives them an insight into the working world and develops their empathy and tolerance of people from different backgrounds and cultures.

Personal, Social and Health Education and Careers Advice

Our PSHE programme reflects the school’s aims and ethos. It also specifically addresses the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It encourages pupils to:

- Enjoy healthy, safe, responsible, fulfilled lives.
- Engage in discussion and debate within a supportive and safe environment.
- Take an interest in topical and controversial issues.
- Learn about their rights and responsibilities.
- Understand the nature of work.
- Develop economic awareness and become informed consumers.

The Junior and Senior Scheme of Work for PSHE will give more detail as to the exact content across the year groups.

There is a wide programme of careers advice in the Sixth Form, along with extensive support for students with University and College applications. There is also a progressive development of careers advice in the lower years.

Assemblies

All pupils attend regular school and form assemblies in both the Junior and Senior departments that cover a wide range of appropriate topics. These include topics such as current affairs, celebration, commemoration and Health and Wellbeing. Pupils also have the opportunity to be involved in leading assemblies should they wish to do so. In the Junior Department, weekly celebration assemblies take place, and each class hosts a special assembly during the year to which parents are invited. More details are given in termly assembly plans.

Curriculum Structure

All periods are 55 minutes in length. All subjects are compulsory in Key Stages 1-3, except for there being some degree of choice in Modern Foreign Languages after Form 1. The length of lessons was chosen after significant discussion and was thought to be an appropriate and effective length of time for the majority of subjects. Occasionally double lessons are facilitated in the Junior School and at A Level in practical subjects such as art and DT, and A Level Science classes can be extended into lunch time or enrichment if necessary. There are also double Games lessons from Year 3 upwards. In the vast majority of cases, lessons in any given subject are spread out across the school week to allow for an appropriate gap between classes and a suitable mix of morning and afternoon scheduling.

Core subjects at GCSE level are:

English

Maths
Science (combined science)
PE and Games
PSHE

Option subjects at GCSE level include:

Art
Computer Science
Drama
DT (Product Design)
French
Geography
History
Music
Physical Education (Sports Studies)
Religious Studies
Spanish
Triple Science

Subjects available for study in the Sixth Form include:

A/AS Level:

Art
Biology
Chemistry
Computer Science
DT (Product Design)
Drama
Economics
English Literature
French
Further Mathematics
Geography
History
Mathematics
Music
Physical Education
Photography
Physics
Spanish
Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) – half A-level

BTEC:

Agriculture
Business
Sports Studies

Sixth Form students are encouraged to consider the EPQ alongside their other A Level subjects, as it develops important skills and allows them to pursue and develop a topic of personal interest to a high level of detail.