

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy

Written By	Deputy Headmaster
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POLICY REVIEW

This 'Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Policy' is reviewed annually, usually just before the Michaelmas term, by the Deputy Head Academic, in consultation with Heads of Department.

Regular weekly staff meetings are a forum for discussion regarding topical issues, such as learning pathways, the curriculum, progression, standards and links across the school. Heads of Department meetings occur as required.

RATIONALE

This policy serves as the overarching framework that represents the why, what, how and when of teaching and learning at Sherborne Preparatory School.

This policy establishes principles against which other policies and procedures can be developed so that they are consistent across the whole school, from EYFS to Year 8.

AIMS

- At Sherborne Preparatory we aim to produce happy and fulfilled pupils through a stimulating but rigorous curriculum, which promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural and physical development and constructs experiences that help them to make sense of the world and prepare them for later life.
- Through supportive and challenging teaching, we aim to develop confident, creative and **independent learners** who possess a firm foundation of core skills.
- In the tradition of great public schools we aim to develop strong leadership qualities, curiosity, individuality and our 6 core Dragon Values.

Independent Learners

In the first five minutes of every lesson, pupils are trained to spend time independently working on 'Now try this' or 'Next step' tasks set by teachers, reading and signing comments left in exercise books, correcting spelling errors, completing unfinished work, checking targets and rewriting messy sections.

10 KEY PRINCIPLES OF OUR APPROACH

1. We help all of our pupils to achieve their full potential.
2. We provide opportunities for active, stimulating, investigative learning.
3. We believe in the importance of securing a firm foundation of knowledge across subjects, to ensure successful progression.
4. We maximise opportunities to explore the interdisciplinary interaction between subjects.
5. We feel that it is important to provide parents with an understanding of progress through regular assessments and meetings.
6. We use data to inform our planning.
7. We recognise the importance of statutory components, which exist side by side with Sherborne Preparatory elements.
8. Our curriculum reflects the collective wisdom of our qualified staff, regarding content and how children learn.
9. Teachers are able to enjoy and maximise professional freedom.
10. We create opportunities to make the most of the strengths of our experienced staff.

CURRICULUM

Our school curriculum is informed by our vision, ethos and six Dragon Values. Our aims are supported by our departmental policies, created and managed by Heads of Departments in the first instance, but widely discussed within the whole school.

The children at The Prep have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which provides continuity and progression and takes their individual differences into account.

The school implements the early learning goals, educational programmes and assessment arrangements of the EYFS.

Our curriculum takes account of the importance of academic, creative, social responsibility/citizenship, health/wellbeing and physical development. Experiences are offered in linguistic, aesthetic, literary, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social areas.

Our curriculum is designed to foster links, helping pupils to make connections between subjects and transfer learning.

TEACHING

The teaching at The Prep fosters intellectual curiosity and a spirit of enquiry.

Staff select the best teaching methods from a range of innovative and established practice to enable all children to acquire new knowledge, based on what they already know and to make progress according to their ability.

Staff are fair, even-handed, helpful and encouraging in their teaching methods. We ensure that any pupil who misses a lesson is given support.

Learning differences and or difficulties are taken into account, as well as social or emotional factors which may affect the children's learning.

Provision and differentiation are applied for those with English as a second language.

There is awareness of children who are able, gifted and talented and provision is made to enrich and extend their learning.

There is an emphasis on learning how to learn and collaboration.

Staff are asked to avoid the overuse of any of the following:

- 'Chalk and talk' or prolonged 'monologue'
- Photocopied sheets
- You Tube
- Textbooks
- Unplanned, unstructured question and answer sessions

Lesson content is distilled from the Subject Model and the Schemes of Work contained in departmental documentation held on SharePoint. This sets out what is to be taught but also provides plenty of scope for spontaneity, whilst offering progression and challenge.

LEARNING

We recognise the need to provide opportunities for all children to learn in ways that best suit them. These include, but are not limited to:

- investigation and problem solving
- cross curricular tasks
- individual assignments
- group, paired, independent and whole-class work
- the integration of technology
- fieldwork and visits to places of educational interest
- creative activities
- debates, role-play and oral presentations
- participation in athletic or physical activity
- use of a range of ways of recording information – graphic organisers, mind maps, charts, extended writing, images etc.

YEAR 8 PROGRAMME

After the Common Entrance examinations, Year 8 begin a diverse programme of events devised to develop leadership, broaden their experiences and to encourage them to: prepare for their new schools; contribute as part of the local community; spark new interests; expand educational options and consider future career directions. This provision ranges depending on the cohort and time available but activities might involve our Dragon Values, community service, cultural links, business challenges, drama, personal safety, new skills such as signing for the deaf and cross-curricular learning.

LEARNING SUPPORT PROVISION

The policy and procedure of the Learning Support Department at The Prep is firmly based upon and closely aligned to the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (SEND)*.

Where a particular concern about a child arises, the member staff refers him or her to the Learning Support Coordinator who will carry out the arrangements as prescribed in the Learning Support policy.

Usually this will involve analysis of the difficulty and the establishment of a process to take any difficulty into account in the wider context of the child's overall learning.

When planning work for learners with difficulties and/or disabilities, staff give due regard to any advice or IEPs produced by the Learning Support Department.

We recognise that some children in our school have special talents and there are those who can be considered gifted, talented and able. Provision is made within lessons and activities to support and develop these children with their own particular higher level needs.

Support is offered to all children for whom English is an additional language in order that they have the necessary language skills to function and integrate into the school, the local community and wider national culture.

Further details can be found in the Learning Support policy, our EAL policy and the Able, Gifted and Talented Policy.

MEDIUM TERM PLANNING

The School is currently moving towards a more cohesive curriculum, forging stronger links between subjects and maximising cross curricular opportunities. The subject model provides a clear framework of content studied from Year 1 to 8. Following a review of this document, staff will chart the progression of skills that pupils progress through at varying rates, dependant on ability.

Schemes of Work are completed by all academic staff and the Heads of Department ensure that these are available on SharePoint at the start of each academic year, in conjunction with key relevant teaching resources. These are working documents which are updated regularly.

PREP

Yrs 3 & 4	Year 3 - Reading, spellings and tables. Creative Prep. Year 4 - 30 mins each night including ten minutes reading.	English and Maths core skills including weekly spellings and reading.
Yr 5	30 building to 60 mins per night to include reading.	English, Maths, occasionally French and Science, weekly spellings and reading.
Yr 6	60 minutes per night, one hour over the weekend.	All subjects and reading, weekly spellings and tables.
Yrs 7 & 8	60 mins per night. In some cases, pupils in the scholarship classes may be set additional extension tasks.	All subjects and reading, spellings for Years 7 as required.

No prep is set in the few days back each term, although all pupils are expected to use the time to prepare thoroughly, check that they have a full set of equipment, reading books, textbooks etc.

By Monday of the second week a prep timetable is drawn up for each class by the Deputy Head Academic and communicated to staff, children and parents.

Subject teachers are asked to adhere to The Prep timetable, to ensure that children are not overloaded.

There is a supervised prep session with the duty staff in the dining hall from 5.00 – 6.00pm each day except Wednesday. This is optional for day children and compulsory for boarders.

GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC STAFF ON THE SETTING OF PREP

Set prep tasks that are suited to and benefit from regular repetition and that pupils can complete independently.

Prep will be set and completed on the specified days (unless set earlier in the week as shown)

Prep should be handed in to the subject teacher at registration on the following morning or in the next subject lesson (teachers will decide arrangement for their subject).

Apart from the scholars, each subject prep should last for 20 minutes of active work.

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Subject teachers are asked to adhere to this timetable, to ensure children are not overloaded.

There is a supervised prep session with the duty staff in the dining hall from 5.00 – 6.100pm each day except Wednesday. This is optional for day children and compulsory for Boarders.

When set prep is completed, all year groups are expected to read, learn tables, spelling or vocabulary.

Pupils missing prep due to commitments will be expected to make up the time through an agreed extension arrangement.

Set work that can be completed by the pupil independently. Differentiate work within classes if necessary.

Set work on the night allocated to your subject in the timetable. Should you not be setting prep on any given night (which should be very rare indeed, but may be necessary if a school-based activity falls during prep time), ask the class to write 'no prep set' next to your subject in the planner.

In the lesson, write the prep set on the board and check that each pupil has copied this down correctly. Fill in planners for pupils who may need assistance.

Ensure that children who missed the lesson due to LS, EAL or Music lessons have photocopies and/or a note of the prep set.

Refer any problems with the completion of preps to the pupil's form teacher.

GUIDELINES FOR FORM TEACHERS ON THE SETTING OF PREP

Publish the prep timetable in classrooms and ensure that each child has glued a copy of this in their planner.

At the beginning of the week, check that each child has copied down the preps expected on each night in his or her planner.

Check and sign each planner during Friday form time and ensure that preps have been recorded and completed.

Keep a record of those pupils experiencing problems with the completion of prep, and those who are floundering on a regular basis. Their names should be submitted to Deputy Head Academic for discussion during the next staff meeting.

GUIDELINES FOR PREP DUTY STAFF

Ensure a silent environment and provide support during the completion of prep.

Encourage pupils to have all the books they may need ready at the beginning of each prep session.

Encourage hard work for each prep set. A note at the end of an incomplete prep stating the time spent on the work can often help subject teachers modify tasks set.

Check pupils are completing prep according to the tasks recorded in planners and initial the box on the page under the day of the week.

Hear individual readers, starting with those requiring regular support.

Support and flag up any problems with preps being too difficult or taking too long with subject or form teachers, as appropriate.

Once all tasks have been completed, ask pupils to read silently until the end of supervised prep.

THE PREP DIARY

Each child is given a Prep Diary at the beginning of the academic year and this is an aide memoire but also facilitates parent/pupil communication.

Reading books and pages heard should be recorded and signed by teachers on the relevant day.

The Form Teacher should oversee the effective day-to-day use of the Prep Diary by each pupil.

Every prep task should be recorded by the pupil and ticked off when completed.

Encourage pupils to use the useful subject pages at the back.

FORM TIME

This is an opportunity to check that pupils have written down their prep correctly and packed away the necessary equipment required for their prep.

MARKING OF WORK

Marking is a written or oral response by a teacher about a pupil's work and should take place within a week of the written task. Pupils are encouraged to review the quality of their own work and their understanding of the lesson objectives. Across all subjects, where relevant, high expectations and standards of spelling, punctuation, grammar and presentation are promoted. Various techniques, relevant to the age of the children, are used across the school. Marking might take the form of ticks, stickers, stampers and written comments for key pieces of work. Effective marking is fundamental to learning and contributes an essential part of continuous assessment. 'Try This' marking can be used to further differentiate work following lessons.

Staff are asked to demonstrate the following in their marking:

Purpose	Nature
To recognise effort, motivate and encourage pupils	Regular, specific, meaningful and manageable marking
To gauge achievement against a given criteria and monitor pupil progress	Marking for different purposes, involving written and verbal feedback
To move learning forward by providing constructive formative feedback, specific guidance and direction	Correcting work in the presence of the child Timing, depth and detail of marking as appropriate for task and pupil
To give feedback about learning outcomes, teaching and lesson planning	Negative comments followed up with discussion between teacher and pupil
To advise pupils on how to improve and inform target setting	Self, paired or class marking
To encourage children to reflect on their own performance.	All finished work responded to within the same week of each lesson
To indicate need for more teacher-pupil conversations about expectations and record	Pupils to read comments and sign their initials to show they have done so for pupils in Years 5 to 8.
To inform parents and report writing	Teachers to include 'challenges' to encourage pupils to apply knowledge further.

PRESENTATION OF WRITTEN WORK

All work should be dated with the full day, date and month (not the year) on the right hand side with the short date only for Mathematics. The upper school will be expected to do this accurately without copying from the board.

Work should be properly headed up.

If less than half a page has been used, pupils will rule off previous work and begin a new task below, starting with the date and title.

Mathematics work will sometimes be set out in columns.

Underlining should be done by ruler.

Blue ink only to be used except for ruling or underlining.

Blue fountain pen should be used from Year 4 when permission is given by the English teacher. Left handers are able to use Berol pens.

Rule through any mistakes.

Pencil and erasers should be used for Mathematics, apart from Y8 scholars who will use pen.

A ruler should be used for all lines and diagrams.

Scribbling on the covers of exercise books and textbooks will not be accepted and pupils will be expected to spend their break time improving the condition of their books if this occurs.

Correction fluid is not to be used. Rule through or bracket mistakes. Ink erasers are not allowed unless specific permission has been given by a member of staff.

It is expected that children will use a dictionary and teachers are rigorous in ensuring that this practice is followed.

Standards, consistency and guidelines for all departments

Staff are expected to ensure that the mark scheme and presentation policy is displayed on the wall of every room and included in personal planners for reference.

All work in exercise books, across all areas of the curriculum, is expected to begin with a benchmark task, where presentation is the sole object of the lesson. This will set the standard for future work and highlight progress.

Pupils are expected to take part in some form of self-assessment at the end of each lesson. This might involve a physical activity of showing thumbs up or down, showing traffic light pages in diaries or recording written symbols such as happy or sad faces under written tasks in exercise books.

Lengthy written responses by the teacher when marking work are expected only where relevant. Use of the marking code ensures continuity of understanding, depth and range of response. Simple 'well done' or 'keep it up' responses alone are not sufficient.

Sticking photographic evidence of practical tasks in exercise books is encouraged.

Parents are invited to visit for an Expo meeting in the Lent term, where their child will share with them the range of dynamic teaching and learning opportunities that have been occurring.

This might take the form of IT, films, galleries, presentations and games, as well as work exercise books.

MARKING CODE FOR WRITTEN WORK

All marking will be completed in green pen.

_____	Key spelling mistakes are underlined. Correct spelling (maximum of 5 spellings) is written at the bottom of the work to be copied 3 times
?	This doesn't make sense and needs rewording
^	One or 2 words have been missed out
*	A phrase has been missed out and has been written at the end of the passage
· ,	Missing punctuation and capital letters added in green
o	Ongoing or repeated errors have been circled
/	New line (e.g. for new person speaking in dialogue)
//	New paragraph
✓	Interesting word or phrase / factually correct
✓✓	Particularly interesting word or phrase
NS	Next Steps
VF	Verbal Feedback
S, C PA or SA	Supported Work, class work e.g. copied from the board, peer or self-assessment

ASSESSING, RECORDING & REPORTING

An annual cycle of assessment, recording and reporting begins in the Pre-Prep, spreading through to the last year of Prep School.

Assessment informs all aspects of teaching and learning at The Prep, however data is considered in context, together with teacher assessment. Potential, progress and attainment are monitored in order to ensure the best teaching and learning is occurring. Teachers make decisions about children's progress and achievement through a combination of their own informal, continuous formative assessment as well as results from traditional, planned online and paper based summative assessments.

Pupils are involved in formally and informally assessing their own learning, which is often evident in exercise books.

A description and analysis of progress, effort and achievement is fed back to parents and children via a system of termly assessment and effort grades, parents' evenings and a set of written reports produced at the end of the Michaelmas and Trinity Terms.

EXAMINATIONS

Heads of Department coordinate the setting of exam papers and mark schemes, which are accessed on SharePoint. Papers are marked by staff under the direction of the Head of Department.

Y3 - 5	Exams are based on the curriculum taught over the year.
Y6	11+ papers in English, Maths and Science. All others as above.
Y7	12+ examinations or above as appropriate. Scholars sit a trial paper in February with Y8
Y8	CE Scholarship papers for the November and February trial exams

PARENT CONSULTATIONS

These are held in the library, usually from 5.10-7.00pm and need to give a full and accurate picture of the child's progress. Year 3 and 8 are held in the Michaelmas term and other year groups follow in Lent. In the Trinity term, a talk is offered to parents from Y5 upwards concerning senior school routes.

REPORTS POLICY

Reports are written twice annually by subject teachers at the end of the Michaelmas and the Trinity Terms and filed on iSAMS.