



THE CAMDEN
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Curriculum Policy



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April 2021

May 2023

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Curriculum Policy

1 Introduction

The school's curriculum consists of everything that promotes learners' intellectual, personal, social and physical development. As well as lessons and extra-curricular activities, it includes approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, the quality of relationships within the school, and the values embodied in the way it operates. The curriculum is often defined 'as a selection of the culture of a society' and such a definition reflects the changing nature of a school curriculum and the need to for us to keep it regularly under review.

This school aims to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which is in accordance with national requirements and good practice but has a distinctive character derived from the strengths and traditions of the school and which reflects the school's ethos, heritage and philosophy.

The Governing Body has responsibility for the curriculum and all curriculum changes are agreed with the Governing Body, after discussion in C&S committee. The curriculum is reviewed annually by the school and the governors.

See also:-

- Exams information
- Curriculum pages on website (includes syllabus details)
- Assessment Policy
- SEND Policy and Access arrangements
- Year Handbooks
- Sixth Form prospectus
- Careers policy
- Equalities Policy
- National Curriculum (DFE website)

2 Curriculum aims: successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

The aims of the curriculum are to enable all students to develop:

- a sense of enquiry, the ability to question, solve problems and argue rationally;
- a willingness to apply themselves and an aptitude for learning;
- knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment in a changing world;
- literacy, numeracy and competence in the use of information technology;
- their creativity, independence of thought, critical awareness, empathy and sensitivity;

- a recognition of their own and others' achievements, in school and beyond;
- confidence in themselves and a sense of self-worth;
- the skills of working as an individual and co-operatively with others;
- appropriate moral and spiritual values and tolerance of others, to value each individual and to learn to live together in an atmosphere of mutual respect;
- an awareness of the pupil's place in the community and opportunities for service to each other and the community.

3 Curriculum principles. We are committed to the principle that all students:

have the right to the highest quality of education we can provide. This means that we seek to ensure:

- breadth and balance for all;
- appropriate levels of expectation and genuine challenge;
- relevance, continuity and progression in learning; by providing courses of study and teaching methods which are tailored to the wide range of needs, interests and aspirations of our students.

Students should be enabled to achieve their full potential. This means that teachers expect all students to aim high and recognise achievement in these four major aspects:

- the motivation and self-confidence to learn in spite of difficulty and failure;
- academic skills such as acquisition of knowledge and the ability to select from it and present it.
- the capacity to apply knowledge through investigation and problem solving;
- personal and social skills including the capacity to communicate, cooperate and take the initiative, as well as the ability to collaborate and work as part of a team.

Students are entitled to a curriculum that is accessible and personalised. This means that we have to find ways of ensuring that all students are engaged in their learning, motivated and enabled to succeed. In order to achieve this teaching staff are expected to ensure that, whenever possible, students who are having difficulty or becoming demotivated are identified and provided with appropriate support, encouragement, guidance and (if necessary) different teaching styles and work, so that they may continue to participate at the most appropriate level for them.

4 Expectations of staff

Staff are expected actively to promote and seek to secure the curriculum aims and principle above and, in particular, to:

- have high expectations of students;
- 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 students' previous experiences, providing progression and continuity, and which conform to the requirements of the national curriculum;
- provide work which meets their students' 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;
- track student progress;
- develop students' skills to become independent learners;
- encourage, reward and value achievement and effort, both formally and informally, through praise in the learning environment;
- work with other staff in a manner that builds upon the strong collegiate and creative ethos;
- work in partnership with other staff, parents/carers and the wider community to achieve shared goals;
- keep parents/carers regularly informed about the progress and achievements of their children;
- treat all members of the school community with respect.

5 Curriculum structure

The school works to the pattern of an eight period day, with five periods in the morning and three in the afternoon. All single lessons are 40 minutes long. Double lessons are quite common, especially in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form. On Wednesday school ends at 2.50 p.m. after lesson 7 to enable staff meetings to take place. Lessons also end at 2.50 p.m. on Fridays except for the sixth form and Years 9, 10 and 11. Thus the teaching week in Years 7 - 8 is 38 x 40 minutes, i.e. 25 hours 20 minutes and 26 hours in Years 9, 10 and 11. In the sixth form AS/A2 level students have 7 lessons in each subject. In addition, sixth form students have 2 compulsory lessons, a tutorial and assembly. A range of enrichment studies is offered which the students can opt to follow. One period per week (currently period 3 on Mondays) is devoted to personal, health, social and economic education, (PSHEE), which is delivered through the pastoral structure.

In addition, students in Y7-11 have 15 minutes of tutorial time each morning which is used to promote a sense of community and belonging in assemblies and to address current pastoral issues, to participate in the School Council agenda and to consolidate high standards of engagement and participation. This means the total curriculum time in Y7 & 8 is 26 hours 35 minutes and Y9-11 is 27 hours 15 minutes.

5.1 Key stage 3: Years 7, 8 and 9

The four classes in each year form teaching groups for some subjects. Smaller groups are created for the teaching of practical subjects. Students who struggle with their learning are given additional assistance by our Learning Support department.

Subjects taught: English and drama, mathematics, science, geography, history, modern foreign languages, theology and philosophy, art, music, design technology (food,

resistant materials and textiles), physical education and personal, social and health education. In modern languages students study French and Spanish in parallel in Year 7. A decision about which language to study from the Spring Term of Year 7 onwards is taken at the end of the Autumn Term of Year 7.

In Year 8, all students study Classics and at the end of Year 8 students are offered the choice for Year 9 of studying Latin or continuing study of classical civilization. Decisions are made between students, parents and staff. Camden School for Girls is one of the few remaining maintained schools to offer the full range of classical subjects; Classical Civilization, Latin and Ancient Greek. In year 7 (maths) and 8 (science & maths) setting occurs and to facilitate this four form groups are subdivided into five teaching sets to reduce class size. In English four form groups are also divided into five teaching groups, but depending on the needs of the year the groups are either 5 mixed ability groups or 4 mixed ability groups with a fifth nurture group. Setting occurs in MFL. Carousels in technology, art and music continue through year 7, 8 & 9. All other subjects i.e. history, geography, PE, classics, RE, are taught in mixed ability form groups.

5.2 Key stage 4: Years 10 and 11

In Years 10 and 11 students follow a rich programme of core and optional subjects.

Core subjects: We offer triple science as well as double science at GCSE, as part of our core offer, which includes English, mathematics, theology and philosophy, physical education, French or Spanish and personal, health, social and economic education. All students take English Literature GCSE as well.

In the Spring Term Year 9 students are offered 3 choices of GCSE and Vocational courses. Options on offer are: Art, Classical Civilisation, Design and Technology (Textiles or Resistant Materials), Geography, Health and Social Care, History, ICT, Latin, Music, Music Performance, Sociology, Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy, Academic support Computer Studies.

In addition GCSE in Ancient Greek and Further Mathematics are currently offered as twilight sessions.

5.3 Assemblies

This is a weekly whole school assembly in which students and /or teachers present on social, moral, spiritual or cultural issues. Student achievement is also celebrated in whole school and year assemblies.

5.4 Key Stage 5: years 12 and 13

We offer a wide range of 'A' level subjects in the Sixth Form. Many of these courses have specific requirements for entry and these are stated in the course description of each subject.

The subjects are organised into a grid system, many of the most popular subjects have more than one class scheduled and this allows for flexibility in the combination of subject choices. However, only one subject can be studied from each grid slot. All subjects have 7 x 40 minutes per week.

All students attend an assembly each week at which a visiting speaker discusses their career and/or an issue of social, moral, spiritual or cultural importance.

5.5 Parents may withdraw their daughter from the sex education aspects of the school's RSE provision but not the relationships teaching. They may withdraw their child from theology by writing to the Headteacher

5.6 Enrichment Studies

Enrichment studies have been designed to broaden a student's Post 16 experience. Courses are generally taught over one academic year. Students have the choice whether to undertake an enrichment study or not. However, if they do choose to study one of these courses then exactly the same criteria apply to them as to any other subject i.e. the expectation that there will be full attendance and homework assignments completed as appropriate.

Enrichment courses offered are: Ancient Greek GCSE, Band Workshops, Big Band, Ceramics, Chamber Choir, Creative Writing, Debating, Drama Production, Football Training Programme, History of Ideas, Jazz Band, Photography, Sixth Form Singers, Symphony Orchestra, EPQ.

6 Curriculum matters

6.1 Principles of teaching and learning: active, independent and life-long learning and differentiation. Curriculum reinforcement of healthy lifestyles.

In order to achieve an effective and enjoyable learning experience for our students we need to ensure that they are actively involved and are able, in some degree, to organise themselves independently. We try to plan our curriculum so that it provides a framework in which active and independent learning can develop, skills which, once acquired, provide a basis for lifelong learning. This aim is reflected in the organisation of our curriculum, in teaching styles and classroom organisation.

We also believe that learners are entitled to a differentiated curriculum which meets their learning needs and builds on their existing knowledge, experience, concepts and skills. In order to deliver a differentiated curriculum – that is one suited to the needs of individuals – staff recognise that in any of their teaching groups, learners:

- acquire competence and understanding in different ways;
- have different speeds of learning;
- are at different stages of self confidence;
- have varying competency in literacy and numeracy;

- have different degrees of motivation, interest in, and commitment to learning
- vary in terms of their manual and physical dexterity and control.

In planning work to support the management of learning, staff ensure that:

- Aims and objectives should be shared with learners so that they know what is expected of them.
- Learners should be offered explicit assessment of their work with diagnostic comment and accurate record keeping. There should be a clear expectation that learners will present their work well and complete it on time.
- Tasks should be suitable and demanding for everyone with extension work not merely repetition. There should be opportunities to develop academic, practical and personal and social skills. Copying should be restricted.
- Assignments, homework and self-supported study should be used to encourage independent learning at every stage.
- Resources for flexible and independent learning should be available in a well organised and accessible format.

The groupings in which learning activities take place should vary. Learners should experience working as individuals, in pairs, in small groups, whole classes, whole year groups or even larger groups, and mixed age groups. Whilst we believe everyone benefits from studying in properly organised groupings in which there are individuals at different levels of achievement, this does not rule out groupings for other activities by the level of achievement. How students are selected for particular groups should be clear and open.

To take account of these differences and the range of ability in any class, all staff have a responsibility when planning work, to meet the needs of all pupils. This will involve, at different times: adapting tasks, providing different resources, developing extension work, providing a variety of learning styles and environments, setting individual goals, giving different levels of support, and offering a variety of ways to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.

We have a policy on assessment, recording and reporting, as formative assessment is very important to the management of learning in terms of responding to individual needs. This policy relates to the aims and objectives of the whole curriculum, its planning and delivery and the process by which we track pupil progress. It also supports consistent practice in every department.

6.2 The learning environment

The school is aware that a lively, purposeful and structured learning environment is essential in promoting high standards and good working practices. Displays of students' work, stimulating materials and appropriate resources are very important in setting high standards and raising expectations. All departments are expected to emphasise good display 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. Whilst this is left to individual teachers and departments, it is expected that classrooms are orderly environments where pupils

can work effectively and in comfort, that adequate resources are provided and are accessible, and that students treat classrooms, workshops, labs and the library with respect.

We have a wide range of activities on offer in PE including team sports, individual and group activities such as trampolining and dance as well as fitness education, linking with our work on healthy lifestyles. This is reflected in science and food technology as well.

6.3 Schemes of work and lesson planning

Each department is required to have schemes of work for all of its courses/programmes related, where appropriate, to the national curriculum or examination board regulations. These schemes of work are followed by all departmental staff and their delivery monitored by heads of department. Schemes of work set out how the content of the course is structured, so that students' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed progressively, and how the teaching is organised. These schemes of work are supported by formative and summative assessment strategies and methods for ensuring standardisation of expectations. Departments also have marking policies which all staff follow. Within the schemes of work framework teachers plan individual lessons, or sequences of lessons, in different ways.

The school does not prescribe a single method for short-term or long-term planning. It simply expects that such planning takes place, in sufficient detail to ensure that pupils achieve high standards and can achieve their potential. Each department has an agreed method for recording classwork and homework.

6.4 Homework

We recognise the importance and value of homework as an extension of classwork and a vehicle to practice skills, acquire new ones and develop good study habits. It is also a very important means by which students can communicate their knowledge, skills and understanding of a subject with their teacher and it sets up a good partnership with parents by encouraging parents and students to collaborate and learn together. Homework promotes the need to take personal responsibility for good organisation, timekeeping and commitment to a set task when working alone.

Homework is set in every year. Each department formulates its own policy on the amount, in accordance with the overall agreed time for each year group; this is monitored by the head of year. Recording, collection and marking are organised departmentally. Homework can take a variety of forms, including research, reading, planning and evaluating as well as the more familiar written work.

In outline, students at key stage 3 should expect homework to be set at least once a week in most subjects. In year 7, the demand is approximately half an hour per subject per week. This rises to about one hour per subject per week by year 9. Students in key stages 4 and 5 are preparing for public examinations and undertake a wider variety of homework tasks. Quite often teachers set homework which extends over more than one week or

even half a term. (It is impossible therefore, to timetable homework rigidly). It is expected that up to two hours homework per week will be needed in each subject in key stage 4 and up to five hours each fortnight at key stage 5.

A timetable of after school and lunchtime Homework Subject Clubs is drawn up each year and published in the Friday Newsletter.

7 Special Education Needs and Disability

The role of the special education needs department is to support the right which all students have to access the curriculum, regardless of their ability. Students with special educational needs are encouraged to become independent and take responsibility within the school.

The school co-ordinates with the Local Authority for the identification of provision for students with special educational needs and the advice of specialists is taken at all stages.

Access to the full curriculum of the school, including the national curriculum, is achieved by careful differentiation of classwork by the subject leader. Through careful planning, the teacher will define what the pupil is expected to learn. Once the learning objective is defined, a subject teacher can seek advice from the special needs and disability co-ordinator (SENDCo) on strategies which might be used to help a pupil achieve the learning objectives. It is the responsibility of the subject teacher to assess whether the objective has been achieved. Schemes of work take account of the need for teachers to plan individual programmes of appropriate content and pace, using a variety of teaching methods and materials.

All those who teach a student with special educational needs are informed of the need by the SENDCo. The SENDCo will ensure that all who are likely to come into contact with the student are updated regularly with appropriate information. Where students have a very specific problem, a meeting will be convened of all subject teachers concerned, to disseminate available information.

The work of the special needs department is supported by Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). As far as possible, each student with a statement of special educational need receives their allocated hours in the form of classroom support. However some students benefit from a limited amount of withdrawal from mainstream lesson and where this occurs it is carefully monitored by the SENDCo to minimise discontinuity in access to mainstream curriculum. The department operates a reading improvement programme for year 7 pupils whose reading ages are substantially below their chronological age, to give them access to the curriculum. Students with disabilities are made very welcome and particular care is taken to meet their needs in subjects which are physically demanding such as PE. The school liaises with physiotherapists and the LA's hearing impairment experts to gain support and training in meeting the educational, social and emotional needs of those students who have disabilities.

8 Able students

A number of students display special talents, skills, expertise and understanding in particular areas. These include levels of ability both in subject disciplines and in activities beyond the curriculum – sporting prowess, artistic flair and musical excellence, for example. It is the responsibility of all staff to identify such students, to encourage their interests and to make appropriate provision for them. Such provision includes planning classroom-based work which genuinely stretches such pupils, and additional challenges and experiences offered through clubs, discussion groups, interest and support groups, extra curricular activities.

9 Examinations

It is expected that all students who embark on a course leading to a public examination are entered for that examination, unless they fail to fulfil the examination board's requirements. Departments are expected to identify, at an early stage, pupils who are in danger of failing to meet these requirements, so that they can be supported, guided and encouraged. To this end a student support scheme exists in year 11 for such students and learning mentors work with students at all key stages.

Decisions about entry are made after careful consultation between pupils, staff and parents/carers. Details of syllabuses are available on request. The school pays for all examination entries for which it has prepared students.

10 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Spiritual development is accomplished in a variety of ways. The assembly programme includes celebrations of a variety of religious festivals and religious education lessons actively encourage students to examine the nature of religion, its beliefs and practices. Students are encouraged to reflect upon their own attitudes and values, in both religious education lessons and other lessons. In some subjects, notably perhaps art, drama, music, humanities and English, students explore their feelings and responses to wider issues and beliefs. Many lessons and extra-curricular experiences allow pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder and to reflect upon inner feelings and ask questions about meaning and purpose.

Moral development is promoted through the tutorial programme (including praise and reward and public acknowledgements at assemblies), through consistent application of the code of conduct and by positive reinforcement of good behaviour. The ethos and practices of the school encourage students to learn to distinguish between right and wrong. We seek to promote good relationships throughout the school community and genuine tolerance and understanding of all cultures. In addition, the assembly programme addresses many moral, ethical, environmental and social issues.

Social development is promoted through many opportunities for pupils to work together, in a variety of situations, both within and beyond lessons. Students have extensive

opportunities to take responsibility through activities such as school council, working groups (eg. behaviour, Envision), charity work, SOS group, buddying scheme, helping out in lower school lessons, proving 1:1 subject coaching.

Cultural development is encouraged both within lessons and through a very wide variety of extra-curricular activities such as music, sport, drama performances, talent shows, art exhibitions, regular visits from theatre groups. Students also take part in a wide range of visits and trips to museums, galleries, theatres and foreign journeys. The range of cultures represented in the school is valued and celebrated.

11 Personal and Social Health and Economic Education (including health, sex and relationships and drugs education)

Personal and Social Health Education is an integral part of the philosophy and ethos of the school. Across the whole curriculum, we aim to develop students' knowledge, values, personal and social skills to help them benefit from their school experience and prepare them to take their place as responsible citizens in society. Many aspects of the school and its work contribute to personal and social education, notably the ways in which members of the school community behave towards one another, the links between the school and the wider community, our many extra curricular activities in sport, drama, music and our very wide range of day trips and residential school journeys.

The PSHE curriculum contributes to a number of cross curricular areas including personal organisation and study skills, health education (including drugs education, sex and relationships education and personal safety), citizenship, environmental education, careers advice and guidance. The PSHE curriculum is taught by form tutors to their tutor groups, supported by specialist staff, outside speakers and theatre groups.

12 Work related curriculum and careers education

The school appreciates that an effective work related programme lies at the centre of the necessary experience of all students. To this end we have devised a programme that seeks to raise aspirations and help all students achieve their potential. We are aware that the changing nature of work requires special skills on the part of our students. As adults, they will need to be able to adapt to changing patterns of employment, operate in a climate of competition and be willing to develop new knowledge, skills and competences throughout their working life.

Through a structured and progressive programme of learning, we expect students to develop an understanding of the demands and challenges of the workplace, the rewards and satisfaction work can bring, the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, and knowledge of the requirements of employers and educational institutions as sources of information and guidance. We also expect them to develop relevant skills, including research, problem-solving and decision making, presentational

and communication, planning and self-management and the confidence needed to operate in the employment market place.

The programme operates throughout all years and its principal features include:

- awareness –raising of changing work patterns
- personal strengths analysis
- job application and interview skills
- research skills – for independent learning
- action planning for further/higher education
- information and guidance about post-16 and post-school education and career routes via LA careers service
- work experience and work placements
- various events such as enterprise day in year 10, options choices conference in year 9
- vocational expansion in KS4 curriculum
- school council VIP on Fridays – visitors describe their career pathways
- departmental guidance on career routes at start of exam courses.

The work related programme is managed by the assistant head and taught by visiting specialists and form tutors. We have effective links with Connexions, and personal advisors work closely with students in key stage 4 particularly those seeking employment or further training. The sixth form has a regular programme of visiting speakers from a wide range of employment areas in their assembly and higher education programme.

13 Heads of Department/Heads of Year and Extended SLT

Heads of department (and heads of year in relation to the PSHEE curriculum) are responsible for effective curriculum provision, including appropriate schemes of work, the necessary resources to support them and the maintenance of appropriate standards. They are responsible for identifying, with the guidance from the deputy head (INSET), appropriate in-service training for staff to improve the quality of provision in the classroom. They are expected to monitor the quality of teaching in the department, and to take steps to improve weaknesses after discussion with their line manager.

Heads of department have a crucial role in quality assurance in relation to the curriculum and its delivery. They are expected to monitor students' standards of achievement and develop strategies to improve them. Heads of department sample teachers' assessment and students' work through the whole school work sampling programme. They are expected to ensure common standards and expectations and to lead the department's work in standardising assessments.

The HODs/HOYs group meets about four times per year and the Extended SLT, consisting of a smaller group of middle leaders, meets every half term and at these meeting they consider (amongst other items) matters concerning curriculum and assessment regarding: planning, monitoring and reviewing, responding to school and external developments and sharing experience and practice. Where possible HODs/HOYs are

consulted on whole school issues such as changes to the school day, alterations to the curriculum structure, assessment procedures and policies.

14 Line Management system to monitor the work of subject areas

Each subject department (along with other aspects of the school's work) has a line manager from the Senior Leadership Team. This line manager acts as a 'critical friend'; their role involves supporting, helping, informing and advising on the one hand, and a quality assurance role on the other. Line managers meet heads of department regularly (usually two or three times per term). Focuses for the discussions during the year typically include:

- reviewing examination results;
- progress on achieving improvement plan targets;
- curriculum planning and development;
- examinations and specifications;
- the development of schemes of work;
- assessment and homework;
- budget and use of resources;
- staffing and INSET;
- student progress and target setting.

15 Curriculum complaints procedure

The school has a complaints procedure, a copy of which is available from the headteacher and on the school website. In summary parents/carers may make representations if they feel that the governing body or school are failing to meet their statutory obligations or are acting unreasonably, e.g. not providing the national curriculum in the school or for a particular child; not following the law on charging for school activities; not providing assessment information. In the first instance a letter should be written to the headteacher at the school and full details of the procedure and an initial response will be provided within seven days.