

## Curriculum Policy

This policy applies to all pupils and staff of Abbot's Hill, including EYFS.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Abbot's Hill is committed to securing the highest quality of learning for all pupils, including those within the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- 1.2 The curriculum and ethos of the school seek to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding and to promote intellectual curiosity, analytical skills, independent thinking and decision-making. The school also aims to develop confidence, good manners, self-discipline and perseverance, together with the development of imagination and the ability to think creatively. The curriculum needs to challenge pupils with high expectations. At the same time it will be sensitive to the needs of individuals, taking into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with SEND, including those with an EHC plan and to their widely varying circumstances, abilities and stages of development.
- 1.3 The school will actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

### 2. Aims

- 2.1 The aims, which reflect those of the school, are to:
  - encourage and help pupils to develop lively enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks and a wide variety of physical skills
  - help pupils to communicate effectively
  - help pupils to develop the essential skills of life
  - develop pupils' knowledge of the Christian religion and respect for the values of other religions and ways of life
  - help pupils understand the world in which they live and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations with their environment and all forms of life
  - help pupils appreciate human achievements and inspirations
  - see learning as an enjoyable, purposeful activity which continues throughout life
  - enable pupils to achieve success reflecting their age, aptitudes and abilities in a range of public examinations, up to and including GCSE
  - develop the essential speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills
  - provide pupils with a full and rounded entitlement to learning
  - foster pupils' creativity and develop essential skills, including learning skills
  - promote a healthy lifestyle
  - inspire pupils to a commitment to learning which will last a lifetime and
  - promote high standards in all learning and teaching

- 2.2 In order for pupils to attain and fulfil these aims, Abbot's Hill endeavours to ensure that the curriculum is:
- **Broad** so that it provides a wide range of knowledge, skills and experiences including, as appropriate to each pupil's age, ability and aptitude, tuition in English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, computing, the humanities, aesthetic subjects, practical activities, physical education and religious and moral education including a specific programme of PSHCEE (Personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education).
  - **Balanced** so that each subject has sufficient time to contribute effectively to learning and the timetable as a whole reflects an appropriate balance of subject elements
  - **Relevant** so that learning can link the pupil's experience to applications in the world at large and so that it can contribute to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of each pupil
  - **Coherent** so that topics can be linked to make the whole learning experience more meaningful.
  - **Progressive** so that what is taught builds in a systematic way upon what has already been learned
  - **Differentiated** so that what is taught and the tasks that are set are matched to the aptitude and ability of each pupil
  - **Accessible** so that there is equality of opportunity for all.
- 2.3 The school's curriculum follows statutory requirements and broadly adheres to the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- 2.4 It is balanced and broadly based, and promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our pupils and effectively prepares our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in British society.
- 2.5 Pupils are expected to acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy.
- 2.6 Religious education is also provided for all pupils.
- 2.7 Appropriate careers guidance is given in the Senior School and pupils in Nursery and the Prep School learn about different careers.

### **3. Equal opportunities**

- 3.1 Entry to all programmes of study is based on academic suitability and appropriateness, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. (The 'protected characteristics' from Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010)

### **4. Disabilities**

- 4.1 In accordance with the statutory requirements, the school aims to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils. The school has an Accessibility Plan, which is available to parents on request.

## 5. Differentiation

5.1 A variety of differing teaching and learning approaches and materials are used in all courses to suit pupils' different needs. The school and teachers will provide a challenging and enriched curriculum to enable our more able pupils to emerge, be recognised and developed as well as to support our pupils that have learning difficulties. Having high expectations means that pupils are encouraged to engage in their own learning by being active participants in lessons and taking responsibility for their own learning, grasping the initiative where possible. The emphasis will be on increasing the depth of knowledge for more able and talented pupils before encouraging them to broaden their experiences.

## 6. Subjects Offered

6.1 The school offers an enhanced form of the Early Learning Goals, National Curriculum and a broad and balanced range of optional subjects in KS4.

## 7. The EYFS Curriculum

7.1 Children are taught through both play and a topic based approach, as appropriate under the Areas of Learning and Development set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework. These are prime areas of Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication and Language and the specific areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. Embedded into the programme is specialist teaching of French, Music and Physical Education.

7.2 Learning encompasses the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL), Learning Outcomes and the Early Learning Goals (ELG). A child's individual learning characteristic will determine the way they respond to both the teaching and learning taking place in the environment. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning identified by the EYFS are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## 8. Years 1 to Year 4

8.1 The pupils are taught a varied and balanced curriculum which broadly follows and enhances the National Curriculum. Art, Computing, Design and Technology, Drama, English, French, Geography, History, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, PSHCEE (Personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education), Religious Education, Science and Thinking Skills are taught by a mix of class teachers and specialist teachers. Spanish is taught from Year 3 onwards.

## 9. Year 5 and Year 6

9.1 The curriculum for girls in Years 5 and Year 6 remains much as it is in the earlier years.. The girls begin to prepare for transition to the Senior School by being taught mainly by subject teachers from Year 5.

## 10. Years 7 - 11

10.1 In the Senior School, girls have the opportunity to study a range of academic subjects and develop in performing and creative arts.

10.2 In Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9), girls study the core subjects of Art and Design, Computing, Dance, Drama, English, French, Geography, History, Home Economics (Food), Maths, Music, PSHCEE (Personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education), Physical Education, Religious Studies, Science and Spanish. Girls are divided into sets across the year group at an appropriate point, according to ability in English, Maths, Science, Modern Foreign Languages and Humanities. Set sizes, differ taking into account the learning needs of individuals, ranging usually from 10 to 18 girls.

10.3 During Year 9, girls choose the subjects they wish to study for Key Stage 4 in preparation for their GCSEs. Their personalised curriculum consists of core compulsory subjects and up to three options.

10.4 In Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11), the compulsory 'Core' subjects are English, English Literature, Mathematics, a Modern Foreign Language, Physical Education, Science (combined or triple) and a short course in Religious Studies. Pupils will also sit the Level 1 or Level 2 modules from the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) in their ICT lessons.

10.5 The remaining three are selected from the following options:

- Art and Design
- Computing
- Dance
- Drama
- Geography
- History
- Home Economics (Food Preparation and Nutrition)
- Media Studies
- Another Modern Foreign Language
- Music
- GCSE Physical Education
- GCSE Religious Studies (full course)

10.6 A request for a pupil to sit a GCSE early in a language the pupil has learnt at home or studied in a previous school is usually considered positively.

10.6 The curriculum in Abbot's Hill paves the way for further Sixth Form study at a wide range of schools. A Sixth Form Forum, attended by a variety of schools is held every September. Along with consultation with the Head of Careers and staff, girls are given the necessary support and advice to make sensible choices for their future education and entry into the world of work.

## **11. Options System**

11.1 Year 9 pupils have a 'Skills and Subjects' talk from an external speaker who also delivers a talk to parents after school on 'Supporting your daughter with her GCSE options'. This is followed by an Options talk given by the Assistant Head Senior and Head of Careers, with support from the SENCo. During that talk, the GCSE Options booklet is issued to Year 9 pupils so that they can discuss their choices with their parents in the lead up to the Year 9 Options Information Evening, where parents are briefed in detail during the course of the evening. This guidance enables pupils to make informed choices and encourages them to fulfil their potential. Most pupils will study 9 or 10 GCSEs.

## **12. Religious Education**

12.1 Religious Education is available to all pupils up to Year 11. Pupils are taught to have mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

12.2 Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education.

## **13. Assembly**

13.1 All pupils are expected to take part in assemblies. Their nature is mainly of a broadly Christian character, but it is not distinctive of a particular Christian denomination and acknowledges the wide range of faiths within the school community. Assemblies may take various formats: full school, year group, clan or form/class assemblies.

## **14. Personal, social, health, citizenship and economic education (PSHCEE) & Careers**

14.1 Our PSHCEE programme reflects the school's aims and ethos and encourages mutual tolerance and respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

14.2 Within PSHCEE lessons, the school provides Relationships Education (RE) in the Prep School and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in the Senior School, in which pupils are encouraged and guided by moral principles and taught to recognise the value of family life, stable and loving relationships, respect, love and care.

14.3 A full statement of the school's Relationships and Sex Education policy is available to parents. It has regard for the government's regulations in Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, which takes effect from September 2020.

14.4 In accordance with the law, biological aspects of human reproduction remain compulsory for all pupils, but children may be withdrawn from any other part of the Sex Education programme provided after discussions between the Headmistress and the parents. The current guidance states that once those discussions have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive

sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with Sex Education during one of those terms. There is no right to withdraw from Relationships Education or Health Education.

14.5 The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school is forbidden by law. Political education is introduced via a number of courses and is presented in a balanced manner with pupils being encouraged to show mutual respect and tolerance for other people, whatever their beliefs.

14.6 Citizenship lessons within the PSHCEE programme encourage pupils to:

- distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
- accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely;
- acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England and
- have respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England;
- prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

14.7 Careers education in the Senior School is presented in an impartial manner, enabling pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

14.8 Our effective careers guidance enables pupils to 'know themselves' and how their strengths, weaknesses and interests relate to the world of work; learn about different careers and opportunities; obtain individual guidance; have some work experience; and gain information about training, education and occupations beyond school.

14.9 The school works to prevent all forms of stereotyping in the advice and guidance we provide to ensure that pupils from all backgrounds and diversity groups consider the widest possible range of careers, including those, which are often portrayed as primarily for one or other of the sexes.

## **15. PE and Games**

15.1 All pupils are expected to take part in the school's Physical Education and Games programme.

15.2 Pupils can only be excused from PE and Games lessons for medical reasons, for which a note from a parent will suffice, or other reasons agreed with the school.

## **16. Enrichment and Extra-Curricular Activities**

16.1 The school has an extensive and ever evolving programme of activities that take place outside the formal curriculum and all pupils are expected to take advantage of the programme. This alongside provision in the classroom develops a range of character attributes, such as resilience and grit, which underpin success in education and employment. There are also Enrichment Weeks in the Prep and Senior School. The

enrichment programme provides the opportunity to hold workshops within the school and opportunities to visit museums, exhibitions, theatres, as well as longer residential trips.

## **17. Homework**

17.1 The school expects homework to be set as appropriate. Individual parent handbooks contain further details. In the Senior School, copies of the girls' homework timetables are uploaded on to the Parent Portal.

## **18. Special Educational Needs**

18.1 The school has a Special Educational Needs policy for pupils with SEND including those with existing EHC plans. The school will determine the appropriate provision in consultation with the parents.

## **19. Concerns and Complaints**

19.1 Parents who have concerns about any aspect of the curriculum should discuss these in the first instance with the pupil's Form Tutor/Class Teacher, the Deputy Head or Head of Prep. If the issue is not resolved, parents should follow the school's Complaints Policy.

## **20. Monitoring and Review**

20.1 The curriculum is reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils and of all applicable regulations and legislation.

20.2 This policy will be monitored by the school's Senior Leadership Team and the Education Committee will review the effective implementation of this policy.

Issue Date: November 2019

Review Date: November 2020 or sooner if major change

*Elizabeth Thomas*

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