

E.1 Curriculum Policy

Introduction

Bishopstrow College specialises in preparing international students to join UK boarding schools. This involves students in a wide range of lessons and activities to give them experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.

A substantial focus is on students improving their ability in speaking, listening, and literacy. The College's specialism in teaching English Language in the classroom is both focused and broad. We use specialist EAL-trained teachers for about half of a student's timetable and specialist subject teachers for the other half. Within the study of subjects, here too is a focus on meeting the needs of second-language learners; our policy is to use these subjects to teach them English broadly, as well as that which is specific to these disciplines.

Mathematics is taught to all students, with the aims, as described above, of developing their mathematical skills such as numeracy, and engaging them in practical exploration of relationships and space, as well as using mathematics to enhance their knowledge and understanding of English.

Science is also taught to all students. To achieve the breadth that prepares them well for the next stage of study, all three sciences are taken by all students. Where necessary, we can provide top-up work to enable individual science subjects to be taken at GCSE.

Technology in the form of ICT is integrated into some aspects of all students' work. The VLE "Grammar Lab" gives experience of self-study in addition to the material learned. ICT is used to develop research skills and for some presentation work across the curriculum. Art classwork and extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for planning and making.

All students have lessons in humanities, and these lessons provide explicit consideration of people, events, actions and consequences over time. Older students also study global perspectives which covers some similar curriculum areas.

Physical education is very important at Bishopstrow College. As well as the benefits of keeping physically fit and understanding their own ability, we seek for all students to enjoy activity, and enjoy discovering that they develop and improve with effort. PE also provides opportunities for social development and, like everything at Bishopstrow College, for learning and practising new vocabulary.

Aesthetic and creative opportunities are found in art lessons for younger students and in creative and craft-based extra-curricular activities for all. Termly "off-timetable days" promote whole-school cross-curricular creative work. The teaching of English includes specific lessons on drama and literature and there are termly drama activities which involve all students.

Further detail of how is contained in the Schemes of Work that describe work by students in all classes.

Values

The curriculum is the means by which the College achieves its objective of giving students the knowledge, skills and understanding to lead fulfilling lives. The values of our College are given in our Ethos and Aims and are those on which we have based our curriculum:

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- We value the way in which all students are unique, and our curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures.
- We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
- We promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our community.
- We incorporate into our curriculum the needs of students with an Educational Health Care Plan
- We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society, and we treat them with fairness and honesty. We provide equal opportunities for all.
- We value our environment and, teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own. This includes the incorporation of Fundamental British Values into every aspect of our teaching and learning at the College.

Curriculum Aims and Objectives

The aims of our College curriculum are:

- To enable effective learning by a wide variety of teaching methods that will excite and extend the intellect of every student.
- To foster within our students a sense of responsibility, sensitivity and a genuine love of learning.
- To promote knowledge and understanding and mastery of intellectual, creative and physical skills through academic, aesthetic and creative education.
- To provide sufficient breadth and depth of information, skills and experiences to create a firm basis for future educational growth.
- To provide the knowledge and skills in order to prepare students for their next schools.
- To incorporate the use of information technology.
- To contribute to the development of personal qualities, attitudes and moral values.
- To provide the skills, experiences and knowledge necessary for a happy and healthy life, participation in the culture of our society, and involvement in family, social and civic life.
- To raise awareness and instil in our students an understanding of Fundamental British Values in all aspects of their life in the UK.
- To provide the means by which our students will be able to grow fully as individuals to adapt to the demands of an ever-changing world and to prepare them for the challenges of the future.

Organisation and Planning

Our curriculum is planned in three phases. There is a long-term plan for each language level, which indicates what topics or skills are to be taught in each term. We call this our 'syllabus'. With our medium-term plans, we give clear guidance on the objectives and teaching strategies that we use when teaching each topic. We call this our 'scheme of work'. Our short-term plans are those that the teachers write on a weekly or daily basis. We use these to set out the 'learning objectives' for each session.

At Key Stage 2 National Curriculum guidelines are observed. At Key Stage 3 the Common Entrance syllabus complements the National Curriculum closely in some subjects, such as science and maths. At Key Stage 4, IGCSE study is offered. In all key-stages, differentiated learning and scaffolded learning helps teachers to adapt the syllabus for students of differing levels of language ability. In our English language classes, we take our syllabus from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). A brief guide to this is presented in Appendix 1.

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SEND

The College's expertise is in supporting students for whom English is not their first language, and we do not have particular expertise in any other educational need. Nevertheless, within the College's range of competencies, we will always seek to support students who have specific learning needs, using external advice and input where appropriate.

The College is unlikely to have the range of expertise to support students with an EHC plan, but with careful consideration and planning we are keen to admit students whose specific learning needs we know we can support.

The College admissions process asks parents about any known learning needs so that we can establish whether and how we can provide support. We have created structures and curriculum at the College for the best support of second language speakers, but we know that these can provide very suitable structures for some specific learning conditions. Our experience is, for example, that we can be ideal for some students with high functioning autism, but have found that we are less successful for those with ADHD or dyslexia conditions.

PSHEE Education

Bishopstrow College has a PSHEE programme tailored to the specific circumstances of the College's students. An average stay at the College is two terms, and some stay as little as five weeks. Within this framework, it is impossible to cover a full range of PSHEE topics, but respect for others is underpinned by the College Five Virtues of being a kind, polite, organised and hardworking, team-player.

Students come from across the world and we recognise that some are from countries where there is intolerance of some of the protected characteristics of:

- a. Age
- b. Disability
- c. Gender reassignment
- d. Marriage and civil partnership
- e. Pregnancy and maternity
- f. Race
- g. Religion or belief
- h. Sex
- i. Sexual orientation

Some students are from countries where there is much greater reverence for some of the protected characteristics.

Through assemblies and tutorials, these are explicitly considered, as are Human Rights. We encourage students to be reflective and thoughtful, whilst presenting a firm humanitarian view in line with British Values. Weekly diary work by every student is constructed to give an opportunity for individual reflection on assembly and tutorial topics.

Assemblies and tutorials also consider a healthy lifestyle, which is promoted extensively through boarding discussions and activities. This covers positive messages around sleep, rest and diet for good mental and physical wellbeing, as well as helping students navigate the challenges of drugs, alcohol and relationships.

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Careers guidance

Careers guidance at Bishopstrow is focused on the choice of appropriate destination schools and supporting the applications required. We undertake this carefully and impartially, working with parental and agent requirements as well as trying to understand each student's strengths and interests.

Students have discussions with boarding tutors to explore their interests and add to the insight that staff have about students. Where specific interests are indicated, the Principal checks the appropriateness of the pathway being considered.

To help them fulfil their potential in the admissions processes, they have interview practice with the Principal, and practice at tests that will be required as part of the entry process.

Activities

Bishopstrow College has a comprehensive activities programme that is an integral part of fulfilling the college's overall aims.

The activities programme covers out of class time both during the week and at weekends.

We seek to use all our out of class activities as an opportunity to contribute to students' communication and language skills.

All activities are undertaken in the spirit of our Five Virtues and so contribute to strong personal, social, and emotional development.

We undertake a comprehensive physical education programme with all students.

Ensuring progress

It is a key aspect of education at Bishopstrow College that we establish the right class placement for every student so that we can provide the right level of stretch and challenge.

The matrix of ability-based English classes and subject classes enables an unusual degree of precision in placing a student in the most suitable class. Small class sizes enable most students need for additional challenge or extra help to be met in class, but 1:1 support is also available.

Outside the classroom, we seek to train boarding and pastoral staff to use out-of-class experiences and activities as equally important opportunities to learn and make progress.

Both in and out of class, staff monitor the progress that students are making. As well as day-to-day conversations that take pace with staff, formal opportunities exist each week for explicit review of progress. There is a weekly teacher meeting that considers individual progress and a weekly boarding meeting with similar considerations.

When necessary, the College will draw on external specialist educational psychologist (or other) advice if we think there are specific underlying reasons for a lack of progress.

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Being good citizens

Bishopstrow College sets out to develop in every student the values, skills and behaviours they need to succeed in life and to contribute unselfishly to the success of others.

Our promotion of the Bishopstrow College Five Virtues (to be a kind, polite, organised and hard-working, team player) is done with calm consistency. We believe this approach encourages not only these virtues to grow, but helps students learn that they can persevere and bounce back in the face of disappointment. For example, we know that all our students need to experiment with the new language they are learning; we encourage them all to try, to take risks with trying to use new words and grammar; we believe that this experience of experiment, fail, persist, learn and grow is important for all aspects of life. The same philosophy extends to activities and boarding life.

All students make mistakes, but Bishopstrow College sets out to be an environment where students are not frightened by such mistakes, but instead see their mistakes and the mistakes of others as a natural part of trying to do better and be better.

To be good citizens requires an awareness and understanding of civic institutions. Students are encouraged to share their knowledge of the structures and institutions they are familiar with in their home countries and to discuss differences that they experience and are presented with in the UK.

“Skills for Life” lessons support students in understanding how to navigate their involvement in society by exploring polite behaviours and social norms.

Differentiation

Students who are very able are given differentiated work within the class and encouraged to be more responsible for areas of their own learning. High achieving students are given extra or differentiated work across all key stages.

Amount of Homework

We increase the amount of homework according to students age and stage. We expect students at Key Stages 2 and 3 to spend 60 minutes each night on set homework, totalling 5 hours per week. This includes a 30-minute English language progress test at the weekend. Students at Key Stage 4 are expected to spend 1.5 hours 5 evenings a week, to include extra reading, complete unfinished work, or project work and catch up on any missed work. In addition, KS4 students sit a 90 minute progress test in English over the weekend.

We set homework for all students as a normal part of College life. We ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of each student, and we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all students can contribute in a positive way. The work produced from students during prep, and the results of their weekly English testing, enable teachers to set individual progress targets to guide students successfully through the syllabus.

Homework is supervised and staff are accessible to answer queries if they arise. Students are encouraged to study in the classrooms or library rather than struggle unaided in their rooms.

English Language

Progression in the English language is at the forefront of teaching at the College. Students are encouraged to use English as the medium of communication in all that they do, both inside the classroom and during everyday life around the College.

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On arrival, students will be assessed in their English language ability and placed in appropriate sets for both English language tuition and the study of subjects such as Science and Humanities. Within these classes, teachers will adapt materials and assessments to suit the needs of the students, with a particular focus given to building English language skills within the subject as well as developing subject knowledge.

English language classes cover an array of linguistic functions within the areas of general and academic English. Students study towards a Cambridge English Assessment, learn how to use the language and produce a variety of text types related to the study of subjects at the appropriate Key Stage, and learn how to read and respond to English literature. Students also take part in debates, seminars, presentations and lead assemblies on PSHE-related topics.

Examinations

Students are assessed in relation to standardised assessments throughout their time at the College. As the academic year progresses, advice and recommendations will be made to students, agents and parents with regards to potential success in upcoming exams. If relevant, students will be given the opportunity to sit IGCSE or Cambridge English language exams in the College's third term (approximately May/June). A list of examinable subjects is presented below:

English language:

CEFR	EXAMINATION	LEVEL	NOTES
A2	Key (KET)	Elementary	Basic qualification in English
B1	Preliminary (PET)	Intermediate	Proves competence in English at a basic level of communication in both social and work situations.
B2	First (FCE)	Upper Intermediate	This is the most widely taken of all the Cambridge EFL examinations requiring knowledge of all the language skills. It is widely recognised by business, commerce, industry and educational institutions as proof of language ability at the higher intermediate level.
C1	Advanced (CAE)	Advanced	Offers a high level final qualification in English for those who need to use the language extensively in their job.

IGCSE (for students in Year 11 or above):

SUBJECT	EXAMINATION BOARD	NOTES
English as a Second Language	Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE)	A useful qualification to show students have been prepared for academic study beyond Key Stage 4.
Mathematics	Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE)	A secondary school qualification in Mathematics; often a prerequisite to study Maths related subjects at A-level.
Additional Mathematics	Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE)	The Additional Mathematics syllabus is intended for high ability candidates who are likely to achieve, Grade A*, A or B in the Cambridge IGCSE Mathematics examination.

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Combined Science	Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE)	A single IGCSE qualification in all three sciences; Physics, Biology and Chemistry.
Co-ordinated Science	Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE)	A double IGCSE qualification in all three sciences; Physics, Biology and Chemistry. This assessment covers each science in greater detail.
History	Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE)	The IGCSE History qualification covers some of the major international issues of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as covering the history of particular regions in more depth. The emphasis is on both historical knowledge and on the skills required for historical research.
Business Studies	Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE)	The Business Studies assessment covers the workings of business in both the private and public sectors of the economy, and shows how important it is to comprehend the importance of change and technological advancement.
Student's First Language	Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE)	Languages such as Japanese, Chinese, Russian and Thai (more are available) as assessed at IGCSE level.

Appendix 1

Grammatical Structures at different Levels in a typical Structural Syllabus (Based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)

(A1) Beginners and Elementary

The verb to be: positive, negative, questions

Personal pronouns: e.g. me, my, mine

A/an + nouns

Singular and plural nouns

This/that/these/those

There is/there are

A/some/any and countable/uncountable nouns

Present simple +,-,?

Possessives

Adverbs of frequency (always, never, etc.)

Modal verb: Can/can't for ability

WH question forms (What, who, where, how many etc.)

Past of to be (was/were)

Past simple (+,-,) regular and irregular verbs

Simple linkers: and, but, so, because etc.

Going to for future plans

Present continuous for temporary events around now

Present continuous for future arrangements

Have got

Prepositions of time (e.g. in, at, on etc.) place (near, next to, opposite etc.) and movement (to, from, into, out of etc.)

Comparative and superlative adjectives (bigger, the biggest)

A/an v. the v. zero article

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Would like to / want to

Modal verbs: have to/don't have to / must/ mustn't

Infinitive of purpose (I went to Tesco to buy some sausages)

Present Perfect simple +, -,

Will and verb for spontaneous decisions (I'll take it)

There is likely to be a stronger focus on lexis (vocabulary) than grammar, including functional phrases for: introductions, offering, making suggestions, inviting, refusing, agreeing, giving basic opinions, making excuses, giving directions

(A2) Pre-Intermediate

This level would include revision and further extension of many elementary areas as well as introducing new items.

Question forms

Present simple v. present continuous

Past simple v. present perfect

Modals: can, can't, must, mustn't, have to, don't have to, should, shouldn't. Different future forms: going to, present continuous, will + verb, planning to, thinking of, etc.

Articles

Modals: May, might, will for possibility

Present tense after if, when, before, etc.

Used to...

Past continuous

Gerunds (-ing forms) after verbs (e.g. like, can't stand). This will have been introduced briefly at beginner's level.

Gerunds vs. infinitives like doing vs. would like to do

Passive forms (it was directed by...)

Present perfect continuous (I've been living here since)

Conditional sentences with will and would (If you do this, I'll do that)

There is likely to be a stronger focus on lexis (vocabulary) than grammar, including functional phrases for: introductions, offering, making suggestions, inviting, refusing, agreeing, giving basic opinions, making excuses, giving directions, making complaints, persuading, etc.

(B1) Low Intermediate

This level would include revision and further extension of many pre-intermediate areas as well as introducing new items.

Question forms all tenses so far.

Questions with 'like' (What's she like?)

Present simple v. present continuous

Past simple v. past continuous

Present perfect: different uses

Modals: can, can't, must, mustn't, have to, don't have to, should, shouldn't, allowed to. Past forms e.g. had to, didn't have to.

Different future forms: going to, present continuous, will + verb, planning to, thinking of, etc.

Articles further rules

Modals: May, might, will for possibility and past forms: e.g. must/might/could/can't have been.

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Present tense after if, when, before, etc.

Used to...

Gerunds (-ing forms) after verbs (e.g. like, can't stand). Extension of verbs concerned.

Gerunds vs. infinitives. Like doing vs. would like to do

Passive forms (it was directed by...)

Present perfect continuous (I've been living here since)

Conditional sentences with will and would (If you do this, /I'll do that) and zero conditional.

Time expressions: e.g. since, until etc.

Indirect questions, e.g. Do you know where he lives?

Question tags e.g. You drink coffee, don't you?

Reported speech

There is likely to be a stronger focus on lexis (vocabulary) than grammar, including functional phrases for: introductions, offering, making suggestions, inviting, refusing, agreeing, giving basic opinions, making excuses, giving directions, making complaints, persuading, etc.

(B1/B2) Mid Intermediate

In addition to the Intermediate syllabus;

Past perfect (When I got there she'd arrived)

'Third conditional' (If I'd known, I would have come)

Verb patterns e.g. more verbs with infinitive or gerund

Questions ending in prepositions 'What did he spend his money on?'

Gradable and un-gradable adjectives e.g. very good (ok) very fantastic (incorrect) further work on passives - other tenses

Quantifiers (a lot of, a great deal of, plenty of, a few, few etc.)

I wish + past simple

More complex linkers: although, however, as well etc.

Relative clauses A prescription is the paper which a doctor gives you.

There is likely to be a stronger focus on lexis (vocabulary) than grammar, including functional phrases for: introductions, offering, making suggestions, inviting, refusing, agreeing, giving basic opinions, making excuses, giving directions, making complaints, persuading, etc.

(B2) Upper Intermediate

General review of all tenses and all grammar so far

Other uses of the gerund (-ing form) e.g. smoking is bad for you

Passives all tenses and it's said/claimed/thought/known that...

Future continuous I'll be seeing him so I can give it to him

Future perfect I'll have finished it by tomorrow morning

Review of article use a/an/the/zero article

Conditionals review

I wish I'd / hadn't

Relative defining and non-defining clauses

More complex linkers: moreover, furthermore, as a result, etc.

Reported speech with verbs that summarise: deny, refuse, insist, etc.

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