



# CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

## **1) Rationale & Aims**

The overall aim of Taunton School is to challenge, inspire and nurture young people to succeed in a global community. Our outstanding teachers inspire pupils and instil in them a desire to learn with an aim to inspire every child to develop into a confident, well-educated, personable young person, who has an enthusiasm for learning. We provide an educational environment that adds value and maximises every pupil's academic achievement.

This policy is central to the school's purpose as a place of learning. We promote care and respect and expect high standards in all aspects of academic matters. It reflects our shared values and our aspirations for all members of the school community in their capacity as lifelong learners.

Taunton Preparatory School's curriculum, teaching and learning policy is based on the following aims:

- Providing a full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education
- Ensuring that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills
- Delivering a curriculum that is balanced, challenging, creative, inspiring and relevant for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- The curriculum will include the following characteristics: breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation, progression, continuity and coherence.
- A curriculum which takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an Educational Progress Pupil passport.
- Having a curriculum which is fit for purpose so all pupils have the opportunity to learn skills and knowledge, whilst understanding the relevance of their learning, and make progress, offering differentiation and personalisation.
- Having the pupil's needs at its core so they are able to reach their potential.
- Nurture pupils' individual talents, creativity and enquiring minds to help them to become independent learners, collaborative team members, confident individuals and responsible citizens within the school community and the wider society.
- Continuity and progression within the Prep School and between Pre-Prep, Taunton School and TSIMS which will widen the pupil's skills and knowledge.
- Work with the Pre-Prep, Taunton School and TSIMS to ease transition for the pupils.
- Effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- Development of individual's personal morals and values, with respect for religious values and tolerance of other races' beliefs and culture.
- Be a centre of excellence in teaching and learning.
- Be committed to excellence and continuous improvement.
- Involve parents and carers in their child's academic journey.

## **2) Related statements and policies**

This curriculum policy should be read in conjunction with other statements, policies and documentation including:

- Departmental and Staff Handbooks
- SMSC Policy and PSHEE curriculum plan
- SEND & EAL Policy
- EYFS Curriculum policy
- Gifted and talented policy
- Behaviour, sanctions and pastoral care policy
- Homework Policy

- Marking and feedback policy
- Presentation of work policy
- Curriculum jigsaws
- Medium term plans for all areas of the curriculum

### **3) Planning and Delivery of the TPS curriculum**

We aim to develop a coherent curriculum building on the experiences they have received in Pre-Prep or their previous school. Taunton Prep School follows the aims and objectives set out in the National Curriculum but with independence and extensions when considered applicable, for example, when personal interests can be linked.

A creative curriculum is taught at TPS in a variety of contexts whether it is as thematic topics or through the TPS Mission (See firefly for information relating to this) where links are made between subjects and lessons.

At TPS our curriculum takes into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils through detailed and careful planning, which is clearly differentiated, both up and down, and which enhances pupils learning without covering old ground. Pupils with EHC plans (or pupils passports here at TPS) are catered for and enhancements and amendments to the curriculum are made accordingly. (See SEND,EAL, gifted and talented policies for further details)

The personal and social development of students at Taunton Preparatory School is enhanced by a comprehensive and progressive PSHEE programme which reflects the school's aims and ethos and pays particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in 2010 Equality Act. There is a focus on the British Values within all areas of the curriculum which promotes democracy, rule of law, individual liberty as well as mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. (See SMSC policy and PSHEE supporting documentation for further details)

For pupils in Years 7 and 8, we provide access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner, enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential. (See SMSC policy and PSHEE supporting documentation for further details)

Our ever expanding extra-curricular activity programme helps to foster and develop this inquisitive nature within our pupils as well as opening up opportunities for development in new areas of their learning. (See firefly for details of our extra-curricular programme).

The TPS Mission is a 12 spoke wheel of key values which help our pupils as individuals to show that they are challenged, nurtured and inspired. We believe that a challenged pupil shows: Teamwork, independence, leadership and high aspirations. A nurtured child shows: Respect, kindness, confidence and positivity and an inspired child shows the following values: Effort, persistence, pride and curiosity. Our HODs and teachers plan lessons across all areas of the curriculum which include and help develop these 12 values. The pupils review their own learning and behaviours on the TPS mission wheel at the end of each term, identifying areas of strength and setting targets for the next term.

Each term, our HODs work with the teachers within their department to develop their curriculum for that term. Medium term plans are created by teachers outlining the lesson coverage for that term. From these the curriculum jigsaws are created and these are shared with parents before the start of the term so they are aware of the themes and topics their child is learning about in that term. (See firefly and school website for a copies of our curriculum jigsaws). These are reviewed termly and again yearly with amendments to the curriculum made accordingly.

Individual lessons at TPS are 35 minutes long. Double lessons are 1hr 10 mins. Although we aim to keep class sizes small, the higher sets in years 6, 7 & 8 will generally have more pupils than the lower ability sets. In setted subjects pupils are set according to formal assessment data, end of unit tests as well as teacher judgement.

Pupils may be subject to set changes throughout the year where this is in the interests of individual pupils and/or the year group as a whole.

In year 3, 4 & 5, pupils are split into two ability sets for maths – Set 1 & Set 2

In year 6, pupils are split into three ability sets for maths – Set 1, Set 2 & Set 3. In English & French they are placed into either set 1 or one of two parallel set 2's.

In year 7 & 8:

- In English and Science pupils are set as follows: a higher set ('Set 1'), two parallel middle sets ('Set 2 red' & 'Set 2 blue') and two parallel lower sets ('Set 4 red' and 'Set 4 blue').
- In French pupils are in five sets – the higher ('Set 1'), two parallel middle sets ('Set 2 red' and 'Set 2 blue') and two parallel lower sets ('Set 4 red' and 'Set 4 blue').
- In Latin the pupils are set as follows: the higher (Set 1), the upper middle (Set 2), the middle (Set 3), and two parallel lower sets ('Set 4 red' and 'Set 4 blue'). These lower sets in Latin will follow a new engaging course in Classical Civilisation which will be accessible and relevant for all.
- For maths pupils are split into five ability sets – Set 1, Set 2, Set 3, Set 4 & Set 5.
- Pupils select either Spanish or German as their chosen second modern foreign language (in addition to French). Sets are dependent on the number of pupils selecting each language.

Discussions take place between subject HODs to decide on the most appropriate set for each pupil.

The Curriculum Plan provides information with regard to the amount of lesson time allocated to each subject in different year groups (See Curriculum Plan)

The TPS Homework Policy provides information with regard to the amount of homework set in each subject area for different year groups (See Homework policy)

#### **4) Assessment, Marking and Feedback**

Pupil performance is closely monitored at TPS through a range of assessments including:

- End of unit tests in academic subjects throughout the year when appropriate for the learning.
- Spelling and reading age assessments at the start of the Autumn and Spring term in order to assess progress.
- Children in Years 1, 3, 5 and 7 take the baseline assessment tests, INCAS/MiDYiS, supplied by Durham University CEM which are used to highlight children's performance and academic potential in a number of areas. The scores are evaluated and the staff are informed. The information gained from the tests supports the teachers to deliver the curriculum appropriately in order to meet pupils needs.
- Standardised testing (GL) is completed in Maths & English from Years 1 – 8 and in Science from Years 3 – 8. In Years 7 & 8 these are taken at the end of the Spring Term and in Years 1 – 6 these are taken in the Summer Term.
- Years 7 & 8 sit Summer Exams which are set and marked internally by TPS teachers and moderated collaboratively by TS HODs.

If a child's progress at any point throughout the academic year is not as expected the Educational Progress Department may become involved. If deemed necessary, specific staff teaching a child will meet to define action points to support a child and these action points will be reviewed accordingly. (See SEND policy for further details).

Marking and feedback to pupils is key in helping children to understand how they are getting on. For further details on our marking and feedback protocols, please see our Marking & Feedback policy.

#### **5) Communication with parents (including reporting)**

Pupils and parents receive a half termly set of assessments (except in the second half of the summer term) which provides an 'Attitude to learning' and an 'Attainment grade'. See appendix 1 for further guidance relating to this.

Parents' evenings are held termly to update parents and guardians on how their children are doing, and how their prospects are for the future. Parents and guardians are also freely invited to consult with teachers and the SMT in person, on the telephone or via email.

## **6) Teaching and Learning**

A key element of teaching and learning is the development of pupil's independence. We endeavour to give the pupils opportunities to:

- understand the learning objectives and how to achieve them (success criteria)
- choose and plan activities
- select equipment/materials to complete the task
- complete tasks without adult intervention for increasing periods of time
- read and understand written instructions/information and be able to identify key points and main ideas
- find information from different sources: books, internet, people, exploration/investigation
- predict likely outcomes and test
- organise, plan and re-draft written responses
- demonstrate persistence when a task appears challenging
- work to a time schedule (links to homework policy)
- transfer learning and skills to other areas of the curriculum (See curriculum jigsaws on firefly and school website)
- ask for help when needed
- learn from mistakes
- set high standards and self-evaluate
- work collaboratively

The quality of display within a school indicates the school's standards, values and ethos. At TPS, displays should be regularly changed (at least half-termly) and any damaged displays immediately replaced.

Pupils and others tend to respect and to look after an environment that has a pleasant, orderly and cared for appearance, and one that they or their peers have helped to create. Classrooms and other areas within the school should be used to celebrate achievement and to demonstrate how the learning has developed.

Displays should:

- Be varied, well arranged and related to the recent, current and impending learning of pupils
- Include some topical matter or issue
- Include pupil ideas and work (not adult drawings decorated by pupils)
- Labelled clearly to indicate the learning with which the whole display or individual items within it are concerned;
- Well-maintained, and modified or dismantled when they have 'run their educational course', rather than being allowed to 'age' or disintegrate
- Made secure when any valuable items are included
- Often be from different countries and cultures or illustrations of these in connection with various environments - local, national and international
- Act as teaching and learning aid to support teaching staff and the curriculum.
- Be used for a variety of purposes including; to recognise and value achievement, for interactive learning and teaching, use by pupils and teachers, as a source of information, to stimulate visually and intellectually

Teachers will conduct a regular classroom environment check considering the following:

- Seating plan, including appropriateness of furniture for all users;
- Accessibility of resources: labelling, tidiness, how far do pupils have to walk to find books, pencils, paper etc?
- Storage of both pupils' and adults' personal property
- Visibility of and for all pupils

We aspire to develop independent thinking and encourage inquiring minds. This requires a range of teaching styles throughout the day and within each lesson. We offer children a carefully planned balance ranging from whole class teaching through to individual exploratory work, passing through interactive group work or interactive whole class

teaching on the way. What we believe is important, is that the teaching approaches employed are the most appropriate for the learning that is taking place.

At TPS our children work for different purposes, with different people and audiences, using different skills and different approaches. Therefore we expect pupils to adhere to appropriate codes of behaviour. These codes are based upon unconditional positive regard for each other and are underpinned by the TPS way. Children will be taught overtly what it means to self-regulate and teachers will be vigilant in looking at what potential barriers there may be for children, working with children and colleagues to modify or remove any barriers (control and care). See our behaviour, sanctions and pastoral care policy for more information on this.

## **7) Roles and responsibilities.**

The Headteacher will ensure that:

- All regulatory elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicates how the needs of the pupils will be met.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the curriculum is adequate.
- The procedures for assessment are in place and pupils and their parents/guardians receive information to show the progress being made and to communicate what is required to help the pupil to improve and to reach their potential.

Assistant Head for Teaching and Learning will ensure that:

- The governors are kept informed regarding the curriculum in the Prep School. This happens through reports to the governors via the EAP meetings (educational advisory panel).
- Progress of cohorts in all subjects is regularly monitored through end of unit tests, standardised assessments and half termly assessments. These are compared with INCAS/MiDyIS data to ensure pupils are on track to reach their academic potential. Any concerns are discussed with the Heads of Department and relevant subject staff/ form tutors and actions are taken where necessary.
- Marking, assessment and tracking procedures are evaluated accordingly.
- Regularly meet with the Head of Pre-Prep and lead teachers for curriculum, teaching and learning at Taunton School, TSI and TSIMS to aid curriculum progression across the schools and discuss within the whole school Academic Steering Group. This is a meeting for all academic heads across the Taunton school community.
- Effective communication occurs with parents at Parent Consultation Evenings and through asking parents to consult teachers at any time during the year. Curriculum jigsaws are sent out termly informing parents of updated curriculum plans.
- Maintain, review and develop the Curriculum Jigsaws.

Heads of Department will ensure that:

- They will work with Assistant Head of Teaching and Learning to review and maintain the Curriculum Jigsaws.
- Maintain, review and develop medium term plans following the school format containing curriculum detail on: context, expectations, skills, learning objectives, learning outcomes, learning and teaching strategies, differentiation and resources or are following a national scheme e.g. Abacus in Maths.
- The curriculum jigsaws and medium term plans ensure progression, continuity and challenge.
- There should be consistency in delivery within their department and the medium term plans are being used by staff.
- The planning and teaching is meeting the learning needs of our pupils.
- Marking and assessment is reviewed within the department and ensure it adheres to the school policy.
- Progress of sets/classes in their subject is regularly monitored through end of unit tests, standardised assessments and half termly assessments. These are compared with INCAS/MiDyIS data to ensure classes/sets are on track to reach their academic potential. Results are discussed with relevant subject staff/ form tutors and actions are taken where beneficial.
- Monitoring and evaluating the progress of individuals alongside the teachers.

- Meet regularly with the KS1 subject link teacher in Pre-Prep & the TS HODs to ensure continuity and progression
- Inform the Assistant Head of Teaching and Learning of any significant changes to the planning, teaching or learning.
- All relevant data and information is inputted into 3Sys, Firefly and subject files where appropriate.
- Best practice is shared within departments and across the school through learning walks and lesson observations.
- Displays are updated regularly.
- TPS Mission skills are taught and practised within their subject area.
- Inform the Assistant Head of Teaching and Learning of CPD which would be beneficial for teachers within their subject areas.
- Communicate with parents at Parent Consultation Evenings and through the open door policy.
- Review and re-write department development plans at the end of each Spring Term.
- Update where necessary the departmental staff handbook and circulate to staff within the team.

Form tutors will ensure that they:

- Have an overview of their tutees academic progress throughout the year.
- Discuss academic targets with their tutees' half termly, recording targets in their planners.
- Review and evaluate their tutees progress towards the 12 values of the TPS Mission, recording targets in their planners.
- Communicate with parents at Parent Consultation Evenings and at suitable times throughout the school week.

All teachers will:

- Monitor results of individual pupils in their classes and discuss with relevant HOD.
- Ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy.
- Work is marked and assessed according to the school's procedures. (See marking and feedback policy)
- Ensure pupil work is set out according to the school's procedures. (See Presentation of Work policy)
- Keep up to date with developments in their subject/year group to ensure their delivery is dynamic and relevant.
- Share best practice with colleagues.
- Participate in professional development, working with other teachers to develop their skills in understanding the learning needs of their pupils and how best to meet the learning needs of their pupils and engage them.
- Teach in a way which gives pupils opportunities to develop the 12 values of the TPS Mission.
- When necessary in Year 8, to give the pupils any advice required enabling them to make subject choices at Taunton School.

## **APPENDIX 1 – Assessment and Reporting**

### **Standardised test results**

Standardised tests are excellent assessment tools because the organisations which produce the tests sample them with tens of thousands of pupils all over the country in both independent and government-funded schools. This means that the performance of any one child can be reliably benchmarked against national standards.

For each standardised test which our pupils sit, a grade is produced for each pupil ranging from 1 to 9, which can be interpreted as per the table below:-

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Definition</b>
9	Outstanding
8	Very High
7	High
6	National Average
5	
4	
3	Working towards National Average
2	
1	

It is important to note that, although using the same range of numbers as the new GCSEs, these grades should not be seen as GCSE grade predictions.

Results are shared with parents as they happen during the course of the year. The results will be uploaded onto the parent portal under 'Published Reports' and parents will be notified whenever new results have been uploaded. We will not be sharing the results of the above tests with pupils. Parents may share the results with their child, if they feel it would be positive to do so

A list of the standardised tests which we do for each year group is as follows:-

- Reading Tests (published by GL Assessment) – Years 3 to 8 – Autumn term and Spring term
- Spelling Tests (published by GL Assessment) – Years 3 to 8 – Autumn and Spring
- English Test (published by GL Assessment) – Years 3 to 8 – Spring (Years 7 and 8) or Summer (Years 3 to 6)
- Maths Test (published by GL Assessment) – Years 3 to 8 – Spring (Years 7 and 8) or Summer (Years 3 to 6)
- Science Test (published by GL Assessment) – Years 3 to 8 – Spring (Years 7 and 8) or Summer (Years 3 to 6)
- INCAS (Interactive Computerised Assessment System) published by the University of Durham – Years 1,3 and 5 – Autumn
- MIDYIS (Middle Years Information System) published by the University of Durham – Year 7 - Autumn

The following points constitute a health warning re the interpretation of test results:-

- When looking at the results of one test, it is always important to bear in mind that they are just a snapshot and can be unreliable if read on their own. A child may not have been able to show his/her true ability during one single 45 minute slot for many different reasons. A child may have been lucky with some of the multiple choice answers, or may have been unlucky!
- Once we have several pieces of assessment data for a child, they can be read together and a more accurate picture emerges.
- Progress doesn't always occur in one straight upward line and pupils do sometimes plateau for a while before making further progress.

Any parent who is concerned about the test results of his or her child is welcome of course to discuss them with the subject teacher, the Head of Department, the Form Tutor, the Assistant Head for Teaching and Learning or the Headmaster.

## Attainment grades

These are reported at the end of each term.

In years 3 – 5, attainment grades will be given in the three core subjects – English, Maths and Science. These grades will be shared with parents via the end of term report which will appear on the parent portal. Parents may share these grades with their children if they feel that it would be positive to do so.

In years 6 – 8, attainment grades will be given in all subjects (except PSHE, Games & PE) to both pupils and parents.

Termly attainment grades will be given using the same scale of 1 to 9. Teachers will benchmark, as closely as they can, the attainment levels of our pupils against national averages, taking into account both independent and government-funded schools. In arriving at each grade, teachers will consider overall performance during the whole term including written and oral work in class, homework and test results.

Grade	Definition
9	Outstanding
8	Very High
7	High
6	National Average
5	
4	
3	Working towards National Average
2	
1	

It is important to note that, although using the same range of numbers as the new GCSEs, these grades should not be seen as GCSE grade predictions.

## Attitude to learning grades

Attitude to Learning grades are given to pupils and parents in Years 3 to 8 at the end of every half term (except for the final half of the Summer term). In each subject, pupils receive one of the following grades:-

Excellent
Good
Satisfactory
Significant Concerns
Very Poor

Pupils will receive a numerical average per term calculated from all of the grades awarded in all of the subjects.

- 10 is the maximum and would mean that the pupil had obtained 'Excellent' in every subject.
- 2 would be the minimum and would mean that the pupil had obtained 'Very Poor' in every subject.

When deciding upon the attitude to learning grades, teachers will give the best fit looking at a range of criteria linked to the TPS Mission including the following:-

- Being ready to learn – coming into lessons quietly with the correct equipment etc. (*Independence and Effort*)
- Effort in presenting work and in handwriting (*Pride and Effort*)
- In class behaviour – listening well, being polite and respectful, putting hand up etc. (*Respect & Kindness*)
- Contributions to in class discussions (*Confidence & Leadership*)
- Positive paired and group work (*Teamwork & Positivity*)
- Willingness to have a go (*Persistence*)
- Amount of effort put in to a task (*Effort*)
- Asking useful questions (*Curiosity*)
- Looking to extend learning (*Ambition*)
- Meeting homework deadlines (*Independence and Effort*)

This system of Attitude to Learning grades has been modified in Spring 2020 for pupils in Years 7 and 8 in order to provide even more challenge and clarity for pupils and parents in knowing how they are doing in terms of their attitudes.