

Blackwood Comprehensive School



Curriculum Policy

Overview

The school curriculum is not simply a collection of subjects or experiences. In relation to the matters or activities which it covers, it is required to be balanced and broadly based and must promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Every maintained school and every maintained nursery school must provide the basic curriculum which includes the following:

- the national curriculum subjects, which applies from years 7-11, currently under review following the publication of 'Successful Futures'
- the statutory National Literacy and Numeracy Framework
- religious education for all registered pupils at the school - up to 19 years old;
- collective worship for pupils up to 19 years old;
- sex education for secondary school pupils;
- personal and social education; and
- careers and the world of work.

The School Curriculum for Wales

The school curriculum implemented from September 2008 comprises:

- the statutory National Literacy and Numeracy Framework*
- a single coherent framework for curriculum, assessment and qualifications for 3–19 year olds, which will help schools to raise standards of achievement and widen educational opportunity. This is currently under review;
- a set of Subject Orders which are manageable and reflect whole curriculum characteristics and those of each key stage. This is currently under review;
- a non-statutory framework for personal and social education;
- a non-statutory framework for careers and the world of work;
- a non-statutory skills framework; and
- a national exemplar framework for religious education.

***There is an additional National Literacy and Numeracy Framework policy.**

Introduction to the Curriculum at Blackwood Comprehensive School

This curriculum policy supports the guiding principles of Blackwood Comprehensive School as being founded on the comprehensive ideal – a belief that all children are of equal value and that it is our task to help develop the abilities and talents that all undoubtedly have. It actively promotes the principles of 'individual human worth, achievement, equal value, co-operation, openness and respecting differences'. This policy expresses a key way in which the school can fulfil its role as 'an inclusive school where every child matters'.

The aims of the school can be summarised as follows:

- To provide a high quality educational experience that recognises the unique personality of each pupil.
- To enable each individual to reach his/her full potential within a culture of high expectations.
- To ensure that every pupil receives a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum, which meets the requirements of the statutory National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, the National Curriculum, the Learning Country and the Learning and Skills Measure.
- To establish a caring, productive and disciplined learning environment that is both supportive to children's needs and pleasant to work in.
- To enable pupils to function effectively as citizens in a rapidly changing society, adapting to its demands by acquiring the social and emotional intelligence required to succeed.
- To encourage pupils to develop lively, enquiring minds and to promote the growth of independence, self-confidence and self-motivation
- To promote understanding, harmony, equality of status and opportunity between every member of the school community.
- To use education and learning for the enrichment of the lives of the whole school community and to promote values and standards of behaviour and achievement that will enable pupils to develop the social skills essential to take up their place in society.
- To encourage a supportive community involvement that includes parents and local industry
- To encourage pupils to participate in a variety of enhanced learning experiences

Statement of Principles

The following principles underpin the provision of education at Blackwood Comprehensive School:-

- All learners are of equal value and should have equal access to a wide range of high quality learning experiences.
- The development of positive self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth is central to the school's academic targets and each pupil's individual development.
- The education of pupils is a partnership between the pupils, their parents, the school and the local community. All have a significant role to play in the development of a culture of success within the school community.
- The educational experience available to all pupils should be broad, balanced, coherent, differentiated and relevant.
- There should be a strong framework of moral values that promotes effective citizenship and academic success.
- Learning is a life-long process. We should develop effective progression routes as well as

promoting the value of life-long learning.

- Children learn in a variety of ways and our teaching reflects the different needs of the learners. We want pupils to know where they are in their learning, where they are going and how best to get there.
- In making the curriculum accessible to pupils we should also recognize the need for pace, differentiation and challenge to ensure that all our pupils are stretched but that they also gain a sense of success as a result of their efforts.

A Guide to the Curriculum

The curriculum is based on the above principles. It consists of all those activities designed or encouraged within the organisational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, social and physical development of all pupils. This includes not only the formal programme of lessons, but also the "informal" programme of enhanced learning opportunities as well as those features which produce the school's ethos.

The curriculum is designed to ensure that all pupils are given appropriate opportunities to fulfil their potential. The greatest compliment and one we should frequently use is: "they did their best"; the school motto "Strive to Succeed" celebrates this compliment. Positive attitudes are cultivated and encouraged so that pupils with diverse abilities and aptitudes can take pride in their achievements.

No two children are alike. The organisation of the school is intended to enable pupils, supported by their teachers, to make informed judgements about their lives.

Pupils are provided with a curriculum that seeks to develop them academically, practically, socially and culturally. The content of the curriculum is determined primarily by the requirements of the National Curriculum and Religious Education. In Years 10 and 11 pupils have the opportunity to study other subjects in addition to the National Curriculum. We make our curriculum appropriate to the needs of the pupils using a variety of teaching styles that encourage a positive attitude to learning, the understanding of concepts and values, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Through our curriculum, the school's curriculum aims are to provide:

- a curriculum which will motivate and challenge pupils of different interests and abilities;
- appropriate provision for those pupils with special needs, the less able and the very gifted;
- a curriculum which develops breadth and appropriate depth in their knowledge, understanding and skills;
- sufficient choice of diverse courses, activities and experiences at an appropriate level for each pupil across the range of ability;
- opportunities for pupils to recognise and develop personal aptitudes and interests which will equip them in making positive and appropriate decisions about their present and future life;
- opportunities to allow pupils to acquire the knowledge, personal qualities and skills that equip them for the challenges and opportunities of adult life, including the skills for work, and encourage lifelong learning;
- courses which address skills needs identified locally and nationally; and
- opportunities for pupils to further develop and reinforce important attitudes and values, including those needed to cope with the responsibilities of life as a citizen in the local and the wider community.

The statutory National Literacy and Numeracy Framework, the Subject Orders and the frameworks for personal and social education and careers and the world of work should help deliver the wider aims, including the promotion of:

- raise standards in learners' literacy and numeracy skills;
- better transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3;
- education for sustainable development and global citizenship;
- education for the world of work and entrepreneurship;
- healthy eating and physical activity; and
- children's and young people's personal and social development, self-worth and well-being.

These skills are considered when we prepare the curriculum.

Expectations of members of staff

Putting principles into practice

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

- have **high expectations** of students;
- Integrate **literacy** and **numeracy** in to their teaching;
- 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**;
- 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 in partnership with other staff, parents/carers and the wider community to achieve shared goals;
- **keep parents/carers regularly and fully informed** about the progress and achievements of their sons and daughters.

Content of the Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to ensure continuity and progression from the Primary to the Secondary phase and, whilst a choice of subjects is available in Years 10 and 11, the structure of the curriculum ensures that breadth and balance are maintained. A programme of careers advice and guidance is in place to assist students in the selection of courses appropriate to their interest and aptitudes.

Taught Time

The time spent on teaching during a normal school week, including Religious Education, is 25 hours. To help achieve the curriculum objectives the school timetable is arranged on the basis of a 50 period fortnight. The school day also includes registration, assembly, break and lunch times.

The school operates a fortnightly timetable with 50 lessons in total in the two week period. There are 5 periods per day (4 in the morning, 1 in the afternoon), each of which lasts for 60 minutes.

Registration period takes place every morning for 25 minutes during which form tutorials and year group assemblies take place. This means that teaching time is 25 hours a week, in line with government recommendations for key stage 4 and in excess of those for key stage 3.

The Statutory School Curriculum, Key Stages 3 AND 4

Years 7, 8 AND 9 - Key Stage 3

During the first three years pupils follow a common course of general education covering a wide range of subjects as prescribed by the National Curriculum. The subjects include English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, French, Welsh, Design Technology, Physical Education, Music and Art. In addition pupils study Religious Education, Information Technology and Personal and Social Education.

Across Key Stage 3

Subjects	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	7	7	7
Mathematics	7	7	7
Science	6	6	6
Expressive Arts (Music, Art)	4	4	4
French	4	4	3
Geography	2	3	3
PSE	1	1	1
History	3	2	3
ICT	2	2	2
Music	2	2	2
PE	4	4	4
RE	2	2	2
Technology	4	4	4
Welsh	4	4	4
Total no of lessons	50	50	50

Drama is taught on a rolling programme in Year 7

THE KEY STAGE 4 CURRICULUM – YEARS 10 AND 11

	Periods per fortnight	Subjects (all single awards, unless indicated)	GCSEs (or equivalent)	Level
Compulsory	7	English and English Literature or Entry Level English	2 Entry Level	1 or 2 Entry Level
	7	GCSE Mathematics GCSE Numeracy. Some pupils may have opportunity to study for alternative qualifications such as Additional Maths	1 1 Entry Level 1	1 or 2 Entry Level
	9	GCSE Science Or <i>Entry Pathways Certificate</i>	2 N/A	1 or 2 Entry level
	2	PE	N/A	N/A
	4	GCSE Welsh	1	1 or 2
	6	Welsh Baccalaureate and RE	1	1 or 2
Options	5	Art and design	1	1 or 2
	10	Asdan Certificate of Personal Effectiveness	1	1 or 2
	5	BTEC in Business Studies	2	1 or 2
	5	Applied GCSE in Global Business Communication in French	1	1 or 2
	5	BTEC Children's Play, Learning & Development	1	1 or 2
	5	BTEC in Performing Arts	1	1 or 2
	5	French/ or Applied GCSE in Global Business Communication in French	1	1 or 2
	5	Spanish	2	1 or 2
	5	Geography	1	1 or 2
	5	Graphics (Design)	1	1 or 2
	5	History	1	1 or 2
	5	Information Technology/ or Computer Science	1	1 or 2
	5	Music	1	1 or 2
	5	Physical Education or BTEC Sport	1	1 or 2
	5	Performing Arts	1	1 or 2
	5	Product Design (Design)	1	1 or 2
	5	Religious Studies	1	1 or 2
5	Leisure and Tourism	1	1 or 2	
5	BTEC in Sport	1	1 or 2	

	14	Separate GCSE Sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)	3	2
Total	25		9-11	

All pupils will study the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Welsh, Religious Studies, Physical Education and PSE. Most pupils will study English Literature, a separate GCSE subject, under the 'umbrella' of English. Pupils will be able to study *the equivalent of two or three* science subjects. The following table indicates the subjects available for study, the qualifications to be attained and the number of periods allocated per fortnight.

Communication with Parents

Option Evening is organised to provide parents with opportunities to discuss curriculum matters and option choice. Option Choice Booklets are supplied to all parents whose children are at the relevant stages in their school careers.

Additional Learning Needs

This work is co-ordinated by the Additional Needs Coordinator/SENCO, working closely with other relevant members of staff. Close contact is maintained with our primary feeder schools in order to identify pupils who may have additional needs. Diagnostic tests and staff referrals are used by the ALN staff to provide the basis for on-going and close monitoring of pupils' progress.

The aim of the school is for **all** children to fulfil their potential, and the school's ALN policy has been designed to support this aim. Individual programmes are provided which support the particular needs of individual students. These programmes are closely monitored to ensure that each pupil achieves to the best of his or her ability. No pupil is denied access to the National Curriculum. Provision for pupils with additional needs is seen as a matter for the whole school. Our aim is to provide a personalised curriculum which is designed to meet the needs of students individually. This may include a 'fast track' approach or forms of curriculum enrichment for students who are particularly able or talented in identified areas.

The school is required to maintain a register of children with additional needs and staff are kept informed of the needs of particular children. The fullest co-operation of parents is sought throughout all stages of this process. A copy of the school's Additional Learning Needs policy is available to parents on request.

Religious Education

All maintained schools must provide religious education for all registered pupils (apart from those who have been withdrawn by their parents). Schools follow the agreed syllabus for the area, which is drawn up by the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), a local conference of teachers, local churches and faith groups, and the LA. The governing body shares responsibility with the LA and the Headteacher for making sure that the religious education requirements are met and Blackwood Comprehensive School follows the Religious Education programme which complies with the locally agreed syllabus.

Collective Worship

- All maintained schools must provide a daily act of collective worship which is broadly Christian for all its registered pupils, including those who are post 16 (section 70 of the

School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ("SSFA").

- A parent or guardian may withdraw their child(ren) from collective worship (section 71 of the SSFA).

All pupils have 1/2 lessons per fortnight. These are non-denominational. Parents have the right, however, to withdraw their children from these lessons provided this is in writing to the Headteacher.

Welsh Language Teaching and Curriculum Cymreig

No subject is taught through the medium of Welsh. The school follows Curriculum 2000 guidelines and all pupils study Welsh as a Second Language to the end of Key Stage 4. There is a comprehensive action plan to promote Bilingualism in a practical and fun way which aims to reflect the WAG 'Iaith Pawb'.

Personal and Social Education

The PSE programme is designed to be appropriate to the changing needs of students as they grow and mature. In Key Stage 3 the PSE programme is normally delivered by a classroom teacher, whilst in Key Stage 4 it is taught by a team of experienced staff through the new Welsh Baccalaureate qualifications, with complementary skills and experience.

Throughout the programme, a number of themes are explored. These are:

Social, Community, Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Spiritual, Moral, Vocational, Learning and Environmental.

The new Welsh Baccalaureate qualifications also focus on the areas of independent research, enterprise and employability, global citizenship and community, digital literacy.

During lessons, issues are discussed using a range of age-appropriate resources. Visiting speakers and theatre groups may be invited from time to time.

Sex Education

All maintained Secondary Schools are required to provide sex education for all registered pupils as part of the basic curriculum.

A full statement of the school's sex education policy is available to parents. It has been drawn up in consultation with staff, pupils and parents, and takes into account the views of representatives from the community. It has regard for the government's guidance in *Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (0116/2000)*.

In accordance with the law the biological aspects of human reproduction remain compulsory for all pupils, but parents may withdraw their children from any other part of the sex education provided without giving reasons. Parents should contact the Headteacher in writing if they wish to exercise this right.

Mixed ability teaching, setting and differentiation

Key Stage 3

In broad, general terms each year group is divided into two cohorts which approximate roughly in terms of number. In Maths and English pupils can be grouped according to ability; pupils who require additional support in either English or Maths will be placed together in small groups so that their needs can be more easily met. In some curriculum subjects from Year 8 onwards, pupils may be grouped broadly according to ability. A small group of pupils with specific learning needs are grouped together for most lessons; in other lessons such as PE and technology the ability range will be fully mixed.

Half-termly and termly reviews, including current performance and effort data, take place to monitor progress and pupils' groups may be changed based upon the outcome of the review. Teachers' programmes of work are carefully prepared to suit the particular needs of the various ability groups, providing sufficient common ground to enable movement between groups. 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. In educational jargon, this approach is known as differentiation.

Equal Opportunities

Entry to all programmes of study is based on academic suitability and appropriateness, regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief.

Disabilities In accordance with the statutory requirements the school aims to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils as far as is reasonably practicable. The school has an Accessibility Plan which is available to parents on request.

Disapplication

Nearly all pupils will follow the full curriculum but and after full consultation with parents the school may disapply a pupil from an element of the curriculum.

PE and Games

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

Extra-Curricular Activities

The school has a wide and varied programme of cultural and sporting activities that take place outside the formal curriculum. All pupils are expected to take part in the programme.

Concerns and complaints

Parents who have concerns about any aspect of the curriculum should discuss these in the first instance with the respective Progress Manager, who will consult with Mrs Fowles.

If the issue is not resolved parents should make an official complaint in writing to the Head teacher.

Assessment, Progression and Recording Achievement

Pupils and parents have a right to know what levels of achievement have been obtained. This will be gauged by day to day assessment, tests data tracking and monitoring, and school examinations.

Please see the School Assessment Policy document for more detailed information.

Political bias: The teaching of politics in schools

The governing body, Headteacher and LA must not allow any teacher to promote one-sided political views when teaching. Teachers must present different views in a balanced way where political issues are covered.

At Blackwood Comprehensive School we also take steps to ensure that, in all cases pupils are given a balanced presentation of political issues. This includes where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils whilst they are at school or taking part in extra curricula activities which are provided or organised at the school or on behalf of the school.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the Headteacher.

The Assistant Head (Curriculum) will report to the Governing Body on the progress of the policy and will recommend any changes.

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