



Curriculum Policy

Whole School Policy Including EYFS

Introduction

The curriculum at Dolphin School ensures that all pupils have equal access to and opportunities to achieve through a relevant, broad and stimulating range of learning experiences. This document sets out a description of our curriculum with reference to how it meets the regulatory requirements (ISI 2020 Regulatory Requirements, Part 1 for the Quality of Education Provided (2: Curriculum)). It should be read in combination with the school policy on Assessment, Homework, Marking, PSHCE and SEND & GT. It is available on the school website. Please also refer to Dolphin School's individual subject handbooks.

Dolphin School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of the Curriculum Policy is non-discriminatory, in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Dolphin is also committed to instilling in its pupils, through its curriculum the core values of the school, in particular that all pupils should feel valued and recognised and that the views of others should be respected. Our curriculum provision precludes the teaching of any partisan political views in any curriculum subject or undermining of fundamental British values. Where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils they are offered as a balanced presentation of opposing views.

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Philosophy

At Dolphin, our rigorous, stimulating and challenging curriculum provides a broad education, ensuring children are encouraged and guided to be well-rounded, confident individuals with a love of learning. High quality learning opportunities enable our children to develop life-long skills within academic, artistic, physical and social areas of the curriculum. The children experience a broad range of activities to help them understand how curriculum areas are relevant to real life and future career opportunities.

Our greatest resource is our highly qualified, dedicated and innovative staff, who keep abreast of current trends in teaching and developments in their specialist fields. Our specialist teachers are recruited to help children develop in all subject areas from an early age; many lessons are taught by specialists from nursery upwards, and from the age of seven all of our classes are taught in this way.

There is a high degree of integration between departments at Dolphin and teachers use cross-curricular links and outdoor learning opportunities to enrich the children's learning. A feature of the enriched curriculum at Dolphin is our extensive range of day trips from nursery to Year 8, our on-site Forest School programme, and our annual residential field trips which are experienced by every child from Year 3 onwards.

Values

Our school curriculum is supported by the core values that permeate our teaching and learning at Dolphin. Our core values are:

- **Freedom** – We value each child’s uniqueness. Children are encouraged to be themselves and they are encouraged and supported to learn in their own way.
- **Confidence** – We value and support each child to give them confidence to develop and grow intellectually, physically, morally and spiritually.
- **Challenge** – We value each child and strive to meet their needs through our curriculum, both academically and emotionally, ensuring we meet all statutory requirements regarding inclusion. Each child is stretched to be successful in their own way.
- **Discovery** – We value the importance of discovery through practical learning opportunities using a range of resources, including our outdoor education and trip programmes.
- **Kindness** – We value the importance of each person in our community. We want to teach pupils to include, cooperate, understand and take care of each other and the world, not only for themselves, but for future generations.

Curriculum Aims

- to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of our children and of society
- to enable pupils to have the opportunity to learn and make progress to the best of their ability across all curriculum areas
- to give pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education
- to provide children with a rigorous, stimulating and challenging curriculum through a range of lessons, teaching methods and suitable activities
- to foster a positive, self-motivational attitude towards learning now and in the future
- to ensure all our children succeed to the best of their ability and feel valued for their contributions
- to allow pupils to have the confidence and freedom to learn through a variety of styles, through both independent and collaborative work, encouraging them to think and learn for themselves
- to provide suitable subject matter demonstrated through written policy, plans and schemes of work which consider the ages, aptitudes and educational needs of all pupils, including those with an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan)
- to help children understand and have respect for the world around them, including how their environment and society change over time
- to engender respect for their environment with an appreciation of how to care for it and behave sustainably

- to provide pupils with personal, social, and health education and development which reflects Dolphin's aims and ethos and encourages respect for other people, paying regard to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010
- to uphold the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual and enable pupils to understand Britain's cultural heritage, and appreciate, value and respect the contributions made by those with different faiths and beliefs within our multi-cultural society

Organisation and Planning

Dolphin School is organised into four phases:

- Early Years and Foundation Stage – Nursery and Reception
- Lower School – Years 1 to 3
- Middle School – Years 4 to 6
- Upper school – Years 7 and 8

Throughout the school our planning is structured in three phases:

- Long term plans – these indicate the topics that will be studied throughout each term by different cohorts of children. Topics are reviewed on an annual basis by staff to ensure they are relevant and current.
- Medium term plans – these plans give clear guidance on the objectives, teaching strategies and opportunities within each subject as well as possible activities.
- Short term plans – these plans are written by staff on a weekly or daily basis, for the teachers' own benefit and personal use to reflect the objectives, resources and activities they will use in their lessons.
- Planning in our EYFS department is through an inter-disciplinary topic approach. Activities are planned carefully to ensure full coverage of all aspects of the early learning goals, ensuring there is planned progression through all areas. There is specialist teaching in music, P.E., modern foreign languages and forest schools.

Our EYFS curriculum planning, influenced by Montessori methods, is the foundation for learning at Dolphin. In these formative years, the children not only cover the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning but also embrace the rich and varied curriculum including our day trips programme.

We use the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies and the 11+ and 13+ Common Entrance Syllabus as guidance documents for our framework of planning for Years 1-8. Other subject areas are planned and devised using subject teacher expertise and cross-curricular links. In Years 1 and 2 foundation subjects are taught as part of a topic approach. All subjects and topics taught are planned to link with our extensive day trips programme.

The children are taught in two smaller classes, but they meet as a year group during form time, PSHE lessons, lunch and other activities. They have six or seven 40-45 minute lessons a day. Classes are split based on various factors, such as dynamics, the characters of the children and their friendship groups; the groupings change annually to allow the children to make social contact across the year group. We set separately for Mathematics, French and other subjects if, and when, we feel that it is

beneficial for the children. With small classes, we can differentiate within all lessons so that the most able are encouraged and stimulated to work to their potential, whilst those who struggle in certain areas are able to receive the support they require to flourish.

At Dolphin plenty of opportunity is provided for project-based learning. Students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a real-world problem, or challenge. As a result, students develop deep content knowledge as well as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. During the Spring Term, children in Year 6 – 8 complete the Delphic Challenge Project Qualification. Project based learning provides the opportunity for authentic assessment which can be used, alongside exam results, to inform end of year grades. It also gives the pupils at Dolphin the opportunity to learn actively by engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects.

Content and Delivery

All children at Dolphin are given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education, with the school day as follows:

Year Group	Core School Hours
EYFS	09:00- 15:00
Years 1 & 2	09:00-15:10
Years 3-6	08:10-15:30

Nursery children are taught following the Areas of Learning and children in Reception follow the Early Learning Goals curriculum. They begin to explore the world through structured and child-initiated activities and free play, with indoor and outdoor learning experiences that form the basis for their learning. We follow the EYFS framework which comprises the 7 areas of learning.

Children in Lower School (KS1, Years 1-2), Middle School (KS2, Years 3-6) and Upper School (KS3, Years 7-8) are taught the following subjects, via specialist teachers for:

English

Mathematics

Science

Computer Studies

Humanities – Geography & History (taught through topics in Years 1 & 2)

PE, Games, Swimming

Music

Art

French

Latin and Classics (Year 5 – 8)

Spanish (Year 7 & 8)

Drama

The following areas are also covered in their weekly timetable:

Personal, Social, Citizenship, and Health Education

SRE & Relationships Education (SRE (Year 6 - 8)

Relationships EYFS – Year 5)
Career Education (Year 7 - 8)
Design and Technology incorporated into art, humanities and science
Reasoning (Year 6 – 8)
Forest School
Team building (Year 4)
Earth Studies (Year 3 – 8)
Global citizenship (Year 6 - 8)

Technology

The ability to effectively use ICT is an essential skill in modern society. ICT skills are taught in designated computing lessons. These can then be used as a tool in other subjects to enhance the learning experience and produce learners who are confident and capable users of technology, aware of its advantages and limitations. Laptops are available for use in the classroom and the Computer Suite can be booked out for specific lesson when necessary. (ISI 2020 Regulatory Requirements, Part 1 (2.2) (a))

Meeting the needs of all pupils

Dolphin believes that children learn best when they are happy, secure and inspired, whatever their needs or level of ability. Most children enter the school in Nursery or Reception. There are no assessments on entry into Nursery and assessments for entry into Reception are informal; because of the age of the children these are inevitably imprecise indicators of academic potential leading to mixed academic abilities within cohorts.

Through curriculum planning, effective teaching and assessment procedures which track pupils' progress, we ensure that all children can learn, whatever their ability or needs. Our low staff to pupil ratios means we can place teaching assistants where they are needed to support the children's learning in the Early Years and Lower School.

Pupils and staff are supported by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and in the Foundation stage by our EYFS SENCO. Our SENCO works closely with staff to identify and support those pupils with specific educational needs. She also co-ordinates the implementation and review of any Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) ensuring that our provision fulfils the requirements of these statements. Liaison between the SENCO, subject teachers, Heads of Year and parents is essential in creating an IEP for students with specific learning difficulties, and gives guidance for those with less severe needs who need support strategies or intervention, within or outside the classroom environment.

Children who are gifted and talented are identified by members of staff and the needs of these children are catered for by adapting lessons, homework and challenges accordingly. These children are identified through regular assessments and tracking throughout the school year; subject specialist teaching allows these children to develop a deeper knowledge in areas in which they may be particularly able.

Regular staff meetings ensure that teachers are aware of any additional pressure children may be under e.g. family pressures, being a carer or having a medical need/requirement.

Inspiring learning by encouraging initiative, individuality, independence, creativity and enquiry

Dolphin is an exciting and enterprising place to learn, to grow and to be. Our *Freedom to Learn* ideal is translated into our learning environments, allowing children to learn in a style that suits them best. Children are encouraged, as much as possible to reflect on whether they have met the learning objectives and these metacognitive strategies are used throughout the school. Older children are encouraged to set their own targets and learn how to evaluate others' work through peer assessment and reflection.

Learning outside the classroom environment is key to developing a love of learning. At Dolphin we embrace opportunities to learn outdoors whenever possible. This can take place via Forest School sessions, our extensive day trip programme and through a wide range of residential and walking trips.

Forest School

Our Forest School educational programme provides children with a unique hands-on, inspirational and challenging learning experience in an outdoor environment. Children learn about the natural environment through self-initiated and child-centred activities. The facilitation of small achievable tasks bolsters their self-esteem and confidence, empowering them to make choices, solve problems, communicate with others and face new challenges.

Our Forest school programme at Dolphin inspires children to:

- Communicate and listen to their peers
- Think critically and solve problems
- Discover their interests and learning styles
- Persevere and become resilient
- Achieve and succeed
- Learn and master new skills
- Have the confidence to take on new challenges
- Connect with their natural surroundings
- Make choices and assess risk for themselves
- Be more physically active
- Manage their feelings
- Reflect on their experiences

Day Trips

Dolphin school aims to deliver a varied, challenging and stimulating education from nursery through to Year 8. Central to this is our extensive programme of day trips. The programme consists of 2-3 trips each term for every year, resulting in approximately 80 trips per school year. Every department in the school runs day trips. All our trips are an integral part of the educational curriculum. The aims of each trip vary but may include:

- Giving the children a real-life experience of topics that would otherwise need to be delivered through print or audio-visual presentations. For example, visits to Hampton Court to study the Tudors and to the Natural History Museum to study the adaptation of whale and dolphins.
- To broaden the curriculum and make it more relevant and exciting. For example, we visit Bletchley Park to study the maths behind codebreaking and go to Swindon Train Museum for a real Second World War evacuee experience.
- To increase the children's passion towards a subject.
- To maximise our outdoor learning experiences. For example, an autumn walk to Cliveden or a Maths challenge at Dinton Pastures.

The trips do not operate in isolation but preparatory and follow up work is carried out in school, to integrate it into the broader topic. The programme is championed by the departments and is monitored by the school's Management Team to ensure the programme remains balanced, relevant and refreshed.

Residential Trips

Every child from Year 3 upward participates in a yearly residential field trip. The syllabuses of most of the departments are carefully related to these trips so that the work covered on a trip in, for instance, geography, will still be used in class geography lessons further up the school. The field trip programme is the spine around which we build our cross-curricular integration in Years 4 to 8. The trips are also very valuable from a social aspect as the children learn to co-operate in group situations and cope with communal living.

Our current residential trips include visits to Dorset, North Wales, Northumbria, East Sussex, Shropshire, Boulogne, and Italy.

Walking Trips

There are also four or five optional walking trips each year, ranging from a four-day junior trip for Year 5 in the Brecon Beacons, to the senior trip - a nine-day mountain walking trip in the Alps. An introductory programme of walks is offered to children in Year 4 in the South Downs and another local practice walk is offered to Year 5 and other children who have not been on a walking trip.

Intellectual, aesthetic, physical and spiritual balance

Dolphin ensures academic and extra-curricular provision has been planned to ensure that all children receive a broad and balanced education. We prioritise pastoral care and wellbeing of the children, adopting a happy and relaxed atmosphere in classrooms and around the school.

Homework

Homework is organised to allow opportunities to give children extra depth of study and follow their own interests and research topics beyond the area of study in the classroom. Children and parents are notified of homework requirements at the beginning of the school year. The variety and length of homework varies depending on the subject and year group.

Mentoring

By the beginning of Year 6, each child has a mentor who is a member of the Dolphin teaching staff. This member of staff will assume this responsibility of a small group of children and they aim to build up a close relationship with both the child and their family. The mentor meets together with the child every other week (sometimes more frequently) and is aware of the child's progress in the different areas of the curriculum as well as of any social or family problems. By talking together, the mentor can build up an overall picture of the child and to liaise between the child, the other staff and the family on any pertinent issue. The mentor endeavours to empower the child to take the responsibility for his or her own learning and the consequences of his/her own actions, as well as being another adult to whom the child can turn during school hours.

Clubs and activities

We have a wide range of lunch-time and after-school activities which both supplement the curriculum and give children the opportunity to further develop their interest in a specific activity and to participate in school team fixtures and practices. These include a variety of music clubs such as samba drumming, ukulele, guitar or string groups, and sports such as netball, football, rugby, cricket, tennis, dance, gymnastics, hockey, athletics, cross-country and swimming. There are also clubs from a selection of the following: chess, art, engineering, drama, orienteering, leadership and team-building, cookery, gardening, German, creative writing, book club, playground games, board games, programming and many more.

School Council

The aims of School Council are to provide a forum for the student body to discuss any aspects of school life in a formal and considered way. School Council meetings take place on a weekly basis and are supervised by a member of staff. Each term pupils nominate a boy and girl to represent their class from Year 4 - 8, with Year 3 representatives visiting twice a term. A Year 8 School Council President is chosen by the staff and serves for the whole academic year. The School Council President chairs each meeting.

School Council is central to the ethos of Dolphin School, giving students the opportunity to learn and engage in the democratic process, including learning how to represent the views of others.

Assemblies

Assemblies take place on a weekly basis, be it in the Early Years, Lower School or Middle/Upper Schools. Children can perform, talk, answer questions and generally be very much involved. Good work is celebrated. Whilst no religious faith is preached, spiritual appreciation is encouraged alongside an understanding of the faiths and beliefs of those around us. Whole year groups present an outline of the class name(s) they represent e.g. trees, artists, scientists, female pioneers, entrepreneurs etc. Assemblies will often reflect key PSHE aims as well as the school's requirements to promote British values.

SMSC

At Dolphin we believe that the school's core ideas underpin all that we do. Children are given the freedom to learn by questioning and by finding out for themselves about the subjects that they are taught and about issues that interest them beyond the curriculum. They are encouraged to explore new avenues, to be themselves and to develop different skills through the discovery and challenge that is embodied in our unique trip programme. As a result of these experiences they will develop

the confidence to be young people who strive to show kindness in all that they do and say, both whilst at Dolphin and in their future lives.

Curriculum Monitoring

Planning and curriculum content is reviewed to ensure the following: it meets the needs of our children and our aims; it provides good continuity and progression within and across year groups; it meets curriculum requirements and offers balanced coverage of subjects. Subject leaders are continually evaluating their schemes of work and updating resources to ensure that we continue to deliver a wide, up to date and creative curriculum.

Written by: Deputy Head (Academic)

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