

CURRICULUM POLICY

Prior Park College

Policy Owner Deputy Head Academic (DHA)	Applies to Prior Park College (PPC)	Superseded documents Academic Policies v1
Associated documents PSHCE and SMSC Policy Teaching and Learning Policy Relationship and Sex Education Policy Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy SEND Policy EAL Policy	Review frequency Every two years (unless the legislation/regulations update before this time) Updated 29 November 2021	Legal Framework KCSIE OfQual The Independent Schools Standards DfE National Curriculum in England Framework and Guidance

1. Introduction

Prior Park Schools (PPS) comprises three schools. Two of those schools, Prior Park College (PPC) and The Paragon School are incorporated in England as Prior Park Educational Trust Ltd. The third school, Prior Park School Gibraltar, is incorporated in Gibraltar as Prior Park School Ltd. Both are companies limited by guarantee and registered charities.

Prior Park College is a community built on Christian values, with emphasis on mutual respect, co-operation, and use of talents. The school promotes a policy of positive teaching, seeking to foster and reward constructive Student contribution. Our aim is to create a positive atmosphere that fosters achievement and the happiness of all members of the community. We aim to reward endeavour and success, stressing the benefits of positive behaviour, and will counter misbehaviour to safeguard the community and the individual.

2. Global aims & Intent

2.1. Ethos & guiding principles

Academic ethos

PPC is a school with love at the centre of everything it does, caring deeply for its students and allowing them to explore and become the adults they want to be within a positive and supportive community and Christian-Catholic ethos.

Academically, we don't force students through a mould. We seek for students to first discover, then make the most of, their individual talents, gifts and interests to become the best and most fulfilled adult they want to be.

This leads to three crucial strands of our academic ethos

- **Abstract, not vocational:** Our curriculum is built unashamedly around abstract academic, not vocational, disciplines and qualifications. This gives students the intellectual breadth to properly explore and pursue their interests and leaves them better equipped for a wider range of directions as they leave us.
- **Curriculum shape:** Our curriculum is deliberately and markedly broad, precisely to give students to range to explore and pursue 'their thing', rather than forcing them through the standard 8-subject mould. L3+F3 expose students to some 18 disciplines (with no choice) so they can start to find where their passions lie. The curriculum then pitches gradually from this 'maximum breadth' at the start to 'maximum choice' at A-Level, where students choose freely from some 28 subjects.
- **Curriculum content and teaching:** Curriculum content in the early years is designed to give the richest possible experience of each discipline, to help students discern their interests. Content is curated by subject expert Department Heads according to the guiding principles below and taught by subject specialist teachers to give the richest possible experience for students.

Guiding principles

This ethos leads to a number of guiding principles that Subject leaders should seek to fulfil as they curate and oversee the curriculum in their subjects:

- Our curriculum should help students **find, explore & pursue their individual gifts, talents & passions**, make the most of themselves, become the adults they want to be.

- **KS3** should serve to expose students to the **broadest possible range** of subjects with minimal choice so they can start to discern where their interests and passions might lie. Subject content should aim to offer the richest possible experience of each subject, even at the expense of coverage rate. We are looking to spark passion and nurture interest, **not** to simply “pre-grind” for GCSE.
- **KS4 & KS5:** Should maintain this experience-rich approach but structure pitches from the maximum breadth of KS3 to maximum depth and choice at GCSE and A-Level to allow students to pursue their individual passions.
- **Catholic-Christian outlook** - Where appropriate content should be Christ-centred, and look to espouse the ideals of love for others, empathy, forgiveness & wider social responsibility. “Education is above all a matter of love and responsibility handed down from one generation to another” *Francis* (2020).
- **Collegiate** - subjects are not lone ships but operate as part of an academic collaboration. Where possible, subjects should work together to create consistent narratives, avoid *content clash* and make the most of fertile links in subject matter.
- **At all Key Stages**, the curriculum should be curated and overseen by subject experts, usually HODS, with regard to the principles of effective curriculum design, including:
 - **Build-up/Build-down:** The start of each curriculum must necessarily build on the end point of the previous Key Stage, and conversely the end should build-down from the start of the following Key Stage. This means curriculum-curators must have a good awareness of the knowledgebases in the preceding and following curricula.
 - **Narratives and conceptual flow:** Curated knowledge should be arranged in consistent narratives where possible. Concepts should be arranged to flow logically and progressively.
 - **Rich experience:** Knowledge should always be taught through the richest possible experiences (prioritise experiments, demonstrations, visits, debates, presentations and other ‘experience-centred’ learning modes).
 - **All students:** Curricula should take into account students’ age, ability level, EAL needs and/or SEND needs to allow everyone to access the knowledge and make progress. This might be through differentiated streams of work (particularly in subjects which are ability-set), through extension or scaffolding attached to common activities.
 - **Challenge:** The level of challenge should increase at a carefully calibrated pace as students progress through the curriculum. As a general principle, our level of challenge should be ambitious for our intake; content should be pitched to the top end of the ability spectrum and appropriate scaffolding and support then employed where needed.
 - **Subject-link:** Where possible and particularly during ground-up reviews, fertile links between subjects should be explored, looking to sequence compatible content across different subjects in the most effective ways, and building consistent narratives between subjects where possible.
- **FBV:** The curriculum should not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

3.2. L3 (Year 7)

Structure

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Maths					English					RE					SHC	Games								PE	Junior Science					
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60		
French				Spanish			History			Geog			Latin			Art		Music		Drama		DT		IT		Early lunch				

Key features

- Broadest possible range that allows a full experience of each subject, with no electives.
- Students are given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education through the Core and co-curriculum
- All students follow a Core Curriculum of English (or EAL for overseas students), Mathematics, Theology, Science, at least one Modern Language, Humanities (History, Geography), IT, Performing and Visual Arts (Art, Music, Drama), DT, PE, PSHCE and Games
- Students acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy through the core curriculum
- Latin is studied by most students in Years 7 & 8
- Students in receipt of EAL and/or LDP support may have an amended core curriculum, agreed by the Assistant Head (Pupil Interventions) and Deputy Head (Academic).
- Students who take part in elite sports provision (e.g. tennis at University of Bath, football at Southampton) have an amended curriculum or timetable to enable them to pursue their sport and also continue to make good academic progress. This is agreed with the DHA on a case-by-case basis.
- Sciences are studied as an integrated 'Junior Science' programme, overseen by the Head of Science, allowing students to study the scientific method in a more coherent way, and develop a more meaningful relationship with their teacher via a greater number of periods with a single member of staff.

3.3. F3 (Year 8)

Structure

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
Maths					English					RE					SHC	Games								PE	Junior Science						
32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60			
MFL 1				MFL 2		History			Geog			Latin			Art		Music		Drama		DT		IT		Early lunch						

Key features

- Maintains idea of broadest possible range, but now introduces a single choice in MFL. Students can select two languages to study from French (continuing), Spanish (continuing) or Mandarin (starting new in Y8).
- Students will be given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education through the Core and co-curriculum
- All students follow a Core Curriculum of English (or EAL for overseas students), Mathematics, Theology, Science, at least one Modern Language, Humanities (History, Geography), IT, Performing and Visual Arts (Art, Music, Drama), DT, PE, PSHCE and Games
- Students acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy through the core curriculum
- Latin is studied by most students in Years 7 & 8
- Students in receipt of EAL and/or LDP support may have an amended core curriculum, agreed by the Assistant Head (Pupil Interventions) and Deputy Head (Academic).
- Students who take part in elite sports provision (e.g. tennis at University of Bath, football at Southampton) may have an amended curriculum or timetable to enable them to pursue their sport and also continue to make good academic progress. This is agreed with the DHA on a case-by-case basis.
- As in Y7, students continue to study the Junior Science programme with a single teacher.

3.4. F4 (Year 9)

Structure

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Maths					English					RE					Games					Sciences									
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
A / MFL 1					History					Geog					Creative					Option 2					Option 3				
																									P4L				
																									IT				
																									PE				

Key features

- After the broad range and minimal choice of Y7 and Y8, Y9 introduces a small amount of carefully guided choice, as students begin to discern their individual gifts, talents and passions.
- Students will be given experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education through the Core and co-curriculum
- Students acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy through the core curriculum
- Students follow a Core Curriculum of English (or EAL for overseas students), Mathematics, Science, a Modern or Classical Language (to be selected from French, Spanish, Mandarin or Latin), Theology, PE, and Games. All students also study History, Geography, IT and a creative art (chosen from Visual Arts, Drama, Music, DT)
- All students follow the Prior4Life course which encompasses RSE, Mental and Physical Health, Enterprise, Careers, Politics, Chaplaincy, Citizenship & Global issues
- Students select 2 further optional subjects from: Visual Arts, Drama, Music, DT, Second MFL (French/Spanish), Classics (Classical Civilisation, Latin).
- Students acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy through the core curriculum, especially English, Mathematics and the Modern Foreign Language
- Students in receipt of EAL and/or LDP support may have an amended core curriculum, agreed by the Assistant Head (Pupil Interventions) and Deputy Head (Academic). In particular, EAL students in Year 9 generally do not study a modern language. This is agreed on a case-by-case basis with the DHA.
- Dedicated LDP classes run in parallel with the timetabled curriculum. In F4 LDP classes are scheduled according to student needs are scheduled against Classics and MFL classes.
- Students who take part in elite sports provision (e.g. tennis at University of Bath, football at Southampton) have an amended curriculum or timetable to enable them to pursue their sport and also continue to make good academic progress. This is agreed on a case-by-case basis with the DHA.

3.5. GCSE (L5/U5 - Years 10 & 11)

Structure

YG / Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Year 10	Maths						English						RE						Sciences											
Year 11	Maths						English						RE						Sciences											

YG / Period	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	
Year 10	Option 1						Option 2						Option 3						Option 4						Games				SHC		
Year 11	Option 1						Option 2						Option 3						Option 4						3-Sci	PS	Games				SHC

Key features

- After discerning their individual gifts, talents and passions at KS3, much of the KS4 curriculum is now predominantly choice-based, allowing students to pursue what is important to them.
- Most students study 10 subjects at GCSE or IGCSE
- These include the core subjects: Theology, English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Double Science
- Students then choose a further four subjects from a range of options, including: separate Sciences, Modern Languages (either French or Spanish), History, Geography, Art, Drama, Music, PE, Classical Civilisation, Latin and DT (Textiles or Product Design);
- Students in receipt of LDP, as well as EAL generally study fewer subjects. This is achieved by dropping one of the optional subjects. Support classes and private study periods are offered for students who may need longer to complete set work
- Most EAL students' study English in a dedicated set, and do not take English Language and Literature separately
- The academic curriculum is complemented by an extensive co-curriculum, including Games and CCF. A broad range of educational visits extends and enriches the taught curriculum. In addition, selected students are given the opportunity to develop their individual talents during co-curricular time
- Students who take part in elite sports provision (e.g. tennis at University of Bath, football at Southampton) have an amended curriculum or timetable to enable them to pursue their sport and also continue to make good academic progress.
- In science, students choose one of two pathways:
 - Double science: Students are taught Physics, Chemistry and Biology separately by specialist staff (4 periods each) and aim toward a dual science GCSE qualification.
 - Triple science: As above, except each science is taught for 6 periods, and students aim toward separate GCSE qualifications in each science.

3.6. Sixth Form (L6/U6 - Years 12 & 13)

Structure

YG / Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33		
Year 12	Option 1											Option 2											Option 3												
Year 13	Option 1											Option 2											Option 3												
YG / Period	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60								
Year 12	Option 4 / Study periods											Games					P4L		GS		Study periods														
Year 13	Option 4 / Study periods											Games					P4L		GS		Study periods														

Key features

- The curriculum is now almost entirely elective, allowing students the freedom to pursue their individual gifts, talents and passions.
- Most students study 3 subjects at A level
- There are a large range of subjects available, including:

Art, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Computer Science, Drama, DT (Prod Design), Economics, French, Geography, Greek, History, Latin, Mathematics, Music, Music Technology, Photography, Physics, PE, Psychology, Spanish, Textiles, PTE (Philosophy, Theology and Ethics), other MFLs as need and talent arises;

- Sixth Formers have the opportunity to extend their studies through enrichment courses (Prior4Life and General Studies) and, in common with all students, take Physical Education with Games
- Students also have the opportunity to study for the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ),
- A broad range of extra-curricular activities (including CCF and DofE) and educational visits extend and enrich the taught curriculum.
- The BTEC qualification is offered in Business in two streams - the equivalent of 2 A-Levels, or a single A-Level.
- Students who take part in elite sports provision (e.g. tennis at University of Bath, football at Southampton) have an amended curriculum or timetable to enable them to pursue their sport and also continue to make good academic progress. This is agreed on a case-by-case basis with the DHA.

3.7. Ability streaming in L3-U5 (Years 7 - 11)

By default, teaching groups at PPC are mixed-ability as we believe, and research has shown, that this leads to better outcomes for students in most situations. In some limited settings, though, where we see a particularly wide range of intake ability and/or we feel it particularly effective to differentiate by ability streaming it is policy to set by ability. This is agreed by the DHA and is currently:

Mathematics: From L3 MM HT2 onwards

Latin: F3 MM HT1 onwards

Science: GCSE (within Dual Science only - triple science sets generally see less of an intake ability range and are mixed ability by option block)

4. Implementation

4.1 Roles & Responsibilities

- The Head, supported by the Deputy Head (Academic) reports to the Governors Education Committee on all matters related to the curriculum
- The DHA and Assistant Head (Director of Studies) have responsibility for curriculum matters in School. They are in turn supported by an examinations officer and data systems administrator.
- Academic Committee is comprised of the Heads of Department and is the principal forum for discussion and management of all matters relating to the academic curriculum. The Academic Committee is chaired by the DHA and reports directly to the Headmaster and School Leadership team (SLT).
- Heads of Departments hold responsibility for the developing and overseeing the curriculum in their subject departments, consistent with the guiding principles in Section 2 of this policy. Heads of Department report directly to a member of SLT.

4.2 Oversight and review

The curriculum in each department is subject to rigorous oversight via three, increasingly prescribed, routes:

4.2.1. Routine oversight via SLT line-management (LM)

All HODs undertake regular LM meetings with their SLT line-manager, in which issues arising with the curriculum during the course of teaching will be discussed.

4.2.2. Annual review via Department Review (DR)

All departments are reviewed annually by the Head and DHA via the DR process (see DR Policy), where they report on matters such as: Public Examination performance, development plans, curriculum, staffing/resourcing, and any staff QA matters (concerns or actions arising from routine observations, work scrutiny and other departmental QA processes).

A specific section of DR focusses on curriculum, normally examining one Key Stage in each DR, and cycling through the Key Stages incrementally each subsequent DR cycle. During the DR, the HOD and DHA will conduct a short review of the Key Stage's curriculum against the guiding principles in this policy and agree any follow-up if needed.

4.2.3. 'Ground-up' content review

From the 2021-22 academic year onwards, the school will periodically conduct a much deeper and broad ranging 'ground-up' review of the curriculum content at each Key Stage, starting with KS3 in the 2021-22 year. This is led by the DHA and will guide HODs through a 12-month cycle that includes:

- Whole-staff training on curriculum development and the School's curriculum vision and guiding principles (delivered by the DHA, usually in September CPD session) and follow-up training throughout the year
- 'Blank sheet' review of curriculum content within each department via discussion led by the HOD and involving all teachers.
- Centrally co-ordinated cross-department sharing and discussion of proposed curricula, via a central live spreadsheet and subject-link meetings.
- A final all-HODs review meeting.
- Planning and resourcing time, usually at the end of the process, ready for teaching the following year.

A typical timeline for this process is shown below for a process starting in Michaelmas 2021:

