

Curriculum Policy

September 2020

CURRICULUM POLICY

This policy sets out the main features of the School's curriculum and is supported by the School's medium term plans and teachers' planners. The policy is available to parents, prospective parents and others through the School Office and on the School's website.

'The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is excellent. Pupils show a high level of achievement in relation to their abilities and make excellent progress across all ages,

'Pupils of all ages, needs and abilities demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They are willing and able to work collaboratively and independently, and show high levels of maturity in their thinking. Pupils are confident to take the lead in their own learning and support one another when working together.'

ISI Education Quality Inspection report January 2020

At Belmont we provide excellence in education through a curriculum that develops inquisitive, independent thinkers with a love of learning. We understand that the curriculum, both within taught lessons and beyond them, should create an environment where questioning, academic risk-taking, divergent thinking, the freedom to learn from mistakes and a Growth Mindset are all encouraged. We intend that our curriculum should instil in our pupils these qualities: responsibility, independence and a sense that learning can excite and invigorate throughout life. Our curriculum aims to prepare pupils for entry into Mill Hill School at 13+ as well as to prepare pupils for life in the 21st Century.

Belmont is part of the Mill Hill School Foundation and as such we work closely with Grimsdell, Mill Hill Pre-Preparatory School and Mill Hill School to ensure that there is continuity and progression in the curriculum between the schools.

Our curriculum provides a broad and balanced education which allows pupils to be:

- increasingly independent, able to show initiative and organise themselves;
- promote equality and diversity
- willing to try new things, ambitious and able to make the most of opportunities;
- able to learn independently and with others;
- able to acquire the study skills and self-knowledge necessary to realise their learning potential, and motivated to achieve the best they can, now and in the future;
- creative, resourceful and able to solve problems;

In addition our curriculum aims to:

- uphold the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability)
- provide appropriate differentiation and support for pupils with SEND and takes into account the needs of pupils with an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan)
- provide academic challenge and rigour
- provide a programme of Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education which reflects the school's aims and ethos (*See PSHEE Medium Term Plans*) which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- provide appropriate careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education, access to up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner, enables pupils to make informed choices about a range of career options and helps to encourage pupils to fulfil their potential
- provide a programme of extra-curricular activities which offers a wide range and which is appropriate to pupils' needs (*See Activities Booklet*)

Organisation of the Curriculum

The academic curriculum at Belmont is divided into two stages: Lower School (Years 3 – 5) and Upper School (Years 6 – 8)

Work in **Year 3** is directed towards consolidating what a pupil has learned in his/her previous school and ensuring that all children have a sound base from which to progress throughout the school. By the end of the year, a child should have established a sound working pattern and know what is expected of him/her.

Children in **Year 4** build on these foundations and academic work is more demanding. They should be aware of the rules and regulations that affect their lives and are expected to show a concern for their surroundings and other people. By the end of the year, pupils are expected to be more responsible and organised.

Year 5 is considered a transition year and children work towards being more independent in order to prepare them for moving into Upper School the following year. The work is generally more demanding with a greater degree of independent learning encouraged.

The Lower School curriculum broadly follows the National Curriculum with adaptations to ensure it is suitably challenging. In all year groups, pupils are taught in mixed ability classes for the majority of their lessons. There is some ability grouping in Maths and Games and the structure of this will depend on the cohort of pupils. For Year 3, this grouping comes into effect at half term in the Autumn Term, after baseline testing has taken place.

The **Year 6** curriculum broadly follows the National Curriculum but is accelerated in many subjects so pupils transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 during this year. Pupils are taught in mixed ability groups for most subjects and are set in Maths and French.

As the pupils work their way through the school they are provided with more specialist teaching. This gives them increasing independence around the school and greater responsibility for their own learning. In the Upper School, all lessons are taught by subject specialists.

Pupils in **Year 7 and 8** follow a KS3 curriculum designed by Belmont's Heads of Department in consultation with Heads of Department from Mill Hill School. This curriculum is intended to prepare pupils for the GCSE curriculum and to improve transition between Belmont and Mill Hill School.

Following a full curriculum review and in a bid to help better prepare pupils for the 21st century, as of September 2017, we doubled the amount of curriculum time for Computing and Design & Technology (DT) in all year groups. Future Skills (described later) and the Creative Learning Project (CLP) in Lower School, were also included. In September 2018 we introduced Spanish to the curriculum for Year 7 and Year 8 and from September 2019 we replaced Latin in Year 6 with an Independent Studies course as it was felt more appropriate for pupils to start learning Latin in Year 7. We also feel Year 6 is a key transition year for our pupils and one in which a lesson specifically teaching study skills is valuable in order to support in all subject areas.

All lessons are 45 minutes long. The table below shows the number of periods per week allocated to each subject throughout the school.

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
English	5	5	5	5	4	4
Maths	5	5	5	5	4	4
Science	2	2	3	3	4	4
French	1	1	2	3	2	2
Spanish	0	0	0	0	1	1
Latin	0	0	0	0	2*	2*
History	0	0	0	2	2	2
Geography	0	0	0	2	2	2
Independent Studies	0	0	0	1	0	0
RE	1	1	1	1	1	1
PSHEE	1	1	1	1	1	1
Art	1	1	1	1	1	1
Music	1	1	1	1	1	1
DT	1	1	1	1	1	1
Computing	1	1	1	1	1	1
PE	2	2	1	1	1	1
Games	2	2	4	4	4	4

	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
Future Skills	2	2	1	1	1	1
CLP (Incorporating Hist, Geog, Eng & drama)	3	3	4	0	0	0

* Some pupils who need more support with their English follow an extra English course instead of studying Latin.
Furthermore in Year 8, some pupils will continue to study Latin, the remaining pupils will follow a non-linguistic Classical Studies course.

Extension and Challenge

The Belmont curriculum is challenging. In order to further extend the most able, teachers are expected to differentiate so that pupils regularly have opportunities for higher level thinking. Alongside this is a rich and varied co-curricular programme with opportunities to extend further our more able pupils. Pupils are entered for internal, local and national challenges in many different subjects e.g. Maths, DT, Satips General knowledge quiz.

In addition to this in Lower School, weekly enrichment opportunities are provided for children in maths. Within Future Skills (see below) certain strands also provide further enrichment opportunities for pupils in a range of exciting activities.

Academic, Music and, from September 2019, Sports awards are offered to outstanding pupils at 11+. We also nominate and prepare pupils with the aptitude and talents to strive for awards and scholarships offered by Mill Hill School on entry at 13+. Awards are available in Maths, English, Science, French, Latin, Music, DT, Art, Drama and Sport.

Belmont Future Skills

This exciting part of our curriculum was launched in September 2020, building on our hugely successful House Carousel (introduced in September 2016). The aim of Future Skills is to equip children with the skills needed in the 21st century workforce and in life. We have built a variety of activities which are available to children in both Lower and Upper School and are undertaken on rotation throughout the year. Children undertake a particular activity for a Half Term which allows for depth of understanding and an opportunity to fully explore what that particular element has to offer.

Future Skills includes the following strands:

- **Innovate**

Both innovation and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) are taught across the school within Future Skills. Examples include documentary making and radio podcasts in Year 7 and robotics in Year 8.

- **Think**

Wellbeing and mental health are at the forefront of what we teach at Belmont. We believe it is vitally important that children are given the skills to both reflect and think effectively. Examples of activities in this strand include Yoga, Mindfulness and Philosophy.

- **Sustain**

At Belmont we are hugely fortunate to be within beautiful grounds and surrounding areas. Future Skills allows us to utilise these grounds and give the children a sense of responsibility around sustainability. Through both Forest Schools and the Eco Garden, the children enjoy all of the possibilities which our grounds are able to offer. This appreciation of nature allows children to think creatively and with a sense of freedom.*

**Due to the timetable constraints as a result of Covid-19, children in Year 6-8 are undertaking a Sustainability Project as opposed to Forest Schools for the Academic Year 2020-21.*

- **Create**

One of the key skills which 21st century employers are looking for is creativity. Like many aspects of our curriculum, Future Skills gives children the opportunity to apply creativity first-hand through the use of Macrame (the art of hand-crafting textiles) delivered by an external expert. Similarly, children are taught Cookery lessons, giving them the soft skills to create their own healthy and nutritional food dishes to try at home.

- **Lead**

The ability to work well within a team and to develop leadership skills is a key part of what we offer in Future Skills. Team building exercises and leadership opportunities through our “Mini First Aid” course strengthen the key skills of collaboration and leadership.

- **Communicate**

Communication skills are developed through the use of Drama and our pupils engaging in Community Projects.**

We also recognise the importance of languages in our curriculum too. Year 7 & Year 8 pupils are given an introduction to German to add to the languages taught on the main curriculum

***As a result of Covid-19, our community projects have been put on hold as we are unable to visit a number of places (such as nursing homes) that we typically would.*

Creative Learning Project

This change to how we teach the Foundation subjects in Lower School was introduced in September 2017. Instead of discrete History and Geography lessons, we have combined these on the timetable along with one English lesson to provide time for pupils to explore a different project each half term. Using resources from a company called Cornerstones, these projects will have a History and/or Geography focus as well as links to other curriculum

areas. The projects are designed to help pupils develop key skills such as enquiry and research, working collaboratively and expressing themselves in different ways whilst continuing to cover key KS2 learning objectives for History and Geography from the National Curriculum. By learning in this way pupils will develop a love for learning and also a deeper understanding of the topics covered. They will be able to make links between different areas of the curriculum and their learning will have more meaning.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education

The School runs a PSHE programme which is designed to complement the academic curriculum. PSHE lessons take place once a week in all year groups from Years 3 to 8. Form tutors are predominantly responsible for the delivery of PSHE to their class. A variety of outside speakers and workshops also cover a range of topics and issues. The PSHE curriculum can be seen in more detail in the PSHE Schemes of Work and Medium Term Plans.

Careers Guidance

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have lessons in their PSHE programme on careers and are given exposure to outside speakers from a variety of professions during the end of year summer programme.

Homework

At Belmont, we refer to homework as 'prep' and we believe there is value to pupils doing some prep every night.

Following a prep review in the Academic year 2015 - 2016, we have designed a prep timetable in which the key word relating to prep is 'flexibility'. Pupils in Lower School (Y3 – 5) are expected to complete up to 30 minutes of prep per night and pupils in Upper School (Y6 – 8) 45 minutes. Teachers set prep that is valuable but is not too onerous on the pupils. For further details, please refer to the Prep Guide for Parents (Appendix). This is also available to download on the school website.

From September 2020 all prep will be set on Google Classroom.

Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

‘Pupils with SEND also make significant progress so that their attainment meets their expected level, as school leaders ensure appropriate intervention, teaching and curriculum provision is well –matched to all pupils’ needs and abilities.’

ISI Education Quality Inspection report January 2020

The School is committed to allowing equality of access and opportunity to all pupils, regardless of their background, ability and any particular individual difficulties or disabilities which they may experience. The Learning Support department plays a key role in this work, seeking to identify, through screening and ongoing monitoring, the particular needs of individual pupils and putting in place strategies (and, where necessary, additional assistance) designed to help them fulfil their potential. Pupils who have a Special Educational Need or Learning Difficulty and/or Disability may have their curriculum modified to take account of their particular needs, as appropriate. Such decisions are made by the Director of Learning Support in consultation with the Lower School or Upper School SENDCo and the pupil’s parents. Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the requirements of this are closely followed in order to ensure that the School provides an effective and accessible educational experience. The progress of all pupils on the School’s Learning Support Register is regularly reviewed and support is amended as appropriate. *(For further information please see Belmont School Policy on Learning Support)*

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

For pupils whose first language is not English, additional support is provided, as appropriate, by the EAL Coordinator. The coordinator provides class, small group, or individual tuition, in the four core areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening in order to allow non-native speakers of English to fully access the curriculum, to exploit their academic abilities and to enjoy all of the social and cultural aspects of life at the School. In some individual cases, pupils who require EAL support follow a modified curriculum in order to accommodate this. Once again, these decisions are made by the EAL Coordinator in consultation with the Director of Learning Support, the Deputy Head (Academic) and the pupil’s parents. For some pupils, individual EAL tuition in addition to class lessons is needed. This is arranged through the Learning Support Department, in consultation with parents. *(For further information please see Belmont School EAL Policy)*

Updated September 2020

Definitions:

EAL	English as an Additional Language
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
PSHE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENDCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics