

Curriculum Policy

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.

At Belmont we aim to 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 imbue 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;
- 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:

- 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
- provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with SEND
- provide appropriate differentiation and support for pupils with SEND and takes into account the needs of pupils with an EHC
- 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. **Children are taught in mixed ability classes in all three year groups and are set for English and Maths. For Year 3 and Year 5, this setting comes into effect at half term in the Autumn Term, after baseline testing has taken place.** There are also weekly enrichment opportunities for children in maths.

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 better prepare pupils for the new 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 DT in all year groups. The House Carousel (described later) and the Creative Learning Project (CLP) in Lower School, were also included. As of September 2018 we have also introduced Spanish to the curriculum for Year 7 and Year 8.

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	1	2*	2*
History	0	0	0	2	2	2
Geography	0	0	0	2	2	2
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
House Carousel	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 who found Latin particularly challenging in Year 7, 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. In addition to this in Lower School, weekly enrichment opportunities are provided for children in maths. Within our carousel (see below) certain strands also provide further enrichment opportunities for pupils in activities such as chess, STEM, general knowledge, history of art and music.

Academic and Music 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 House Carousel

This exciting initiative was introduced in September 2016. For one lesson a week (two lessons for Years 3 and 4) the children are in their houses and experience a variety of activities that will help to equip them with the soft skills needed to succeed in the 21st century workforce and also in life. These skills include among others, resilience, creativity, adaptability, team work and emotional intelligence. The carousel includes the following strands. Details of when each activity is timetabled can be found in Appendix A.

Forest Schools

This outdoor learning experience is an opportunity for the children to develop team work and leadership skills, creative thinking, resilience and an appreciation of nature and the beautiful surroundings we are spoilt with at Belmont. Forest Schools is not currently available in every year group.

Intellectual and Cultural Enrichment

Building on some of the work started in form time and assemblies this year, we want to provide the children with a rich cultural and intellectual experience at Belmont. Some of the topics covered in this strand of the carousel will include history of art and music, developing general knowledge, understanding learning styles, philosophy, improving independent learning skills (library and research skills), Growth Mindset theory and playing chess. Some year groups also have the opportunity to take part in STEM activities. In Years 7 and 8 pupils also get lessons in German.

Wellbeing

This part of the carousel may come as welcome news to families who have been dealing with anxious and worried children during the summer tests and exams. Helping children to cope with pressure and deal with stress is something that is regularly in the media. The pupils will have opportunities to experience mindfulness and yoga and they will also learn about developing resilience and the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Life Skills

This aspect of the House Carousel will give the children a varied experience of vital elements that start to build the foundations in preparing them for life beyond school. The children will learn about personal finance, the environment (they will do some work in the Eco Garden), how to cook, how to stay safe online as well as how to stay safe in real life, presentation and interview skills and the importance of community links and charity work.

Drama

Years 3 to 5 include drama as part of their Creative Learning Project (see below) and Upper School have it as a strand in their carousel lessons. Drama is one of the strengths of the school and we have some wonderful and inspiring drama teachers. There are huge benefits for the children of having drama on the curriculum and not solely participating in an annual performance. Drama allows pupils to develop self-esteem, empathy, teamwork, an ability to express their emotions and it also enhances their public speaking skills.

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. We believe that by learning in this way the 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 Education (PSHEE)

The School runs a PSHEE programme which is designed to complement the academic curriculum. PSHEE lessons take place once a week in all year groups from Years 3 to 8. Form tutors are predominantly responsible for the delivery of PSHEE to their class but some are also supported by other teachers on a carousel who teach more specialist topics e.g. Relationships and Sex Education. A variety of outside speakers and workshops also cover a range of topics and issues. The PSHEE curriculum can be seen in more detail in the PSHEE Schemes of Work and Medium Term Plans.

Careers Guidance

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are given exposure to outside speakers from a variety of professions. Pupils in Year 8 are taught interview skills as part of the House Carousel.

Homework

At Belmont, we refer to homework as 'prep'. During the academic year of 2015 – 16 we conducted a full review of prep. The review involved canvassing the views of teachers, parents and pupils as well as investigating what other schools are doing and looking at current studies into the value of prep. From the outset we were clear that any changes made

to the current structure of prep must reflect our professional view of what is right for the majority of our pupils.

In our surveys parents, pupils and teachers all saw the value in prep but the overall feeling was that it should be more flexible so that it is not too much of a burden on children or families.

As a result of the prep review, the key word relating to prep is 'flexibility'. 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 B). This is also available to download on the school website.

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

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 Head of Learning Support in consultation with the Deputy Head (Academic) 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. She 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 Head of Learning Support, 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 October 2018