



Westminster Tutors

CURRICULUM POLICY

This curriculum policy illuminates how Westminster Tutors translates its aims and values into practice. It consists of all the planned activities which the school provides to enable the students to meet their full academic potential along with promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Principles

The aims of our curriculum are:

- To provide equal opportunities for all students regardless of gender, aptitude or cultural, ethnic or religious background;
- To ensure that the students receive a broad and balanced educational experience;
- To prepare students for the world beyond the school by facilitating the development of positive personal and social values;
- To meet the statutory requirements for students in England at Keystages 4 and 5
- To encourage links with external employers and groups.

Curriculum Delivery and Structure

- The school delivers the curriculum over a 33 week academic year with the taught school week meeting the 24 hour minimum limit for 12-14 year olds and the 25 hour minimum limit as stipulated in the relevant legislation for 14-16 year olds.
- The curriculum is designed to meet legal requirements, including national standards and benchmarks, and is under constant review to integrate changes as they are determined by

government or examination awarding bodies. It further aims to incorporate other key themes deemed essential to the students' personal, social, health and economic education (PSHCE) through the mandatory PSHCE course which includes such topics as citizenship, careers education and guidance, and sex and relationships education), as well as a weekly mandatory sports session for students of compulsory school age.

- Westminster Tutors, reflecting its student-centred approach and flexibility, allocates the following teaching to each subject studied at GCSE and at AS/A level:
 - GCSEs over two years (standard courses):
 - 2 hours per week per subject if in a one-to-one class;
 - 3 hours per week per subject if in a class of two to three students;
 - 4 hours per week per subject if in a class of four to six students.
 - GCSEs over one year (intensive courses):
 - 4 hours per week per subject if in a one-to-one class;
 - 6 hours per week per subject if in a class of two to three students;
 - 8 hours per week per subject if in a class of four to six students.
 - A levels over two years (standard courses):
 - 3 hours per week per subject if in a one-to-one class;
 - 4 hours per week per subject if in a class of two to three students;
 - 5 hours per week per subject if in a class of four to six students.
 - A levels over one year (intensive courses):
 - 6 hours per week per subject if in a one-to-one class;
 - 8 hours per week per subject if in a class of two to three students;
 - 10 hours per week per subject if in a class of four to six students.
- There are no set teaching periods, with the duration of each specific lesson period moulded around the students' needs and existing timetable. Indeed, there are no timetable restrictions on the subjects offered, with the timetable being designed to meet the students' needs and choices of subjects.

- While the school operates a chosen exam boards policy (please see below for details of these boards), the inherent flexibility of our approach and our small group or one-to-one teaching allow the student, working in partnership with the teacher, to determine which examination boards and which specifications are suitable for the student. In this way, the students are able to start taking personal responsibility for their education and provide valuable inputs to the educational process from the beginning of their student lives with us.
- For retake students, we aim to continue teaching the units previously taught thereby providing continuity for the students. However, the college reserves the right to change boards and specifications if it is in the best interests of the student.

The subjects offered and the chosen examination boards are as follows:

| The Arts | GCSE | IGCSE | A level |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| Art | AQA | Edexcel | AQA |
| Photography | AQA | N/A | AQA |
| Music | Edexcel | Edexcel | Edexcel |
| | | | |
| Business | | | |
| Business Studies | AQA | Edexcel | AQA |
| | | | |
| English | | | |
| English | AQA | Edexcel | OCR |
| English Language | AQA | Edexcel | OCR |
| English Language and Literature | N/A | N/A | Edexcel |
| English Literature | AQA | Edexcel | OCR |
| | | | |
| Humanities | | | |
| Classical Civilisation | OCR | N/A | OCR |
| Government and Politics | OCR | N/A | Edexcel |
| History | OCR | Edexcel | OCR |
| History of Art | N/A | N/A | Edexcel |
| Philosophy | N/A | N/A | AQA |
| Religious Studies | OCR | Edexcel | OCR |

| Languages | GCSE | IGCSE | A level |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| Chinese | N/A | Edexcel | Edexcel |
| French | AQA | Edexcel | Edexcel |
| German | AQA | Edexcel | Edexcel |
| Greek (Classical) | OCR | N/A | OCR |
| Italian | AQA | N/A | Edexcel |
| Latin | OCR | N/A | OCR |
| Spanish | AQA | Edexcel | Edexcel |
| | | | |
| Mathematics | | | |
| Mathematics | Edexcel | Edexcel | Edexcel |
| Further Mathematics | Edexcel | Edexcel | Edexcel |
| | | | |
| Sciences | | | |
| Biology | AQA | Edexcel | OCR |
| Chemistry | AQA | Edexcel | OCR |
| Physics | AQA | Edexcel | OCR |
| Science | AQA | Edexcel | N/A |
| Additional Science | AQA | Edexcel | N/A |
| Geology | N/A | N/A | OCR |
| | | | |
| Social Sciences | | | |
| Economics | Edexcel | Edexcel | AQA |
| Geography | OCR | Edexcel | OCR |
| Psychology | AQA | N/A | AQA |
| Sociology | AQA | N/A | AQA |

- Due to changes in how performance tables are collated, for GCSEs, the presumption will be that a student will take the GCSE rather than IGCSE equivalent. However, if after an initial assessment, the teacher, in agreement with the SLT, believes that the IGCSE specification would be more suitable to the student's educational attainment and overall development, then the IGCSE course may be followed.

- For students who join the school part way through their GCSE and A level courses, the school will continue to teach them on the same examination board and syllabus, thereby offering a seamless transition with minimum disruption to their studies. Similarly, students who join the school to re-take either GCSEs or A levels will be continued of the same examination board and syllabus, unless either the school or the student feel it would be advantageous to change to a different board.

Curriculum Changes: 2015 – 2017

- As part of the government’s reforms to GCSE and A-level, including both curriculum content and grading system for GCSEs, new specifications will be available for first teaching from September 2015. These will be through three phases as detailed below:

| | September 2015 (Phase 1) | September 2016 (Phase 2) | September 2017 (Phase 3) |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| GCSE | English Language English Literature Maths | Art & Design Geography History Languages (Modern and Ancient) Music RS Physics Biology Chemistry Combined Science | Ancient History Business Studies Classical Civilisation Economics Geology Psychology Sociology Statistics |
| A Level | Art & Design Business Studies Economics English Language English Literature English Language and Literature | Geography Languages (Modern and Ancient) Music RS | Accounting Ancient History Classical Civilisation Further Maths Geology Government and Politics |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | History Psychology Biology Chemistry Physics Sociology | | History of Art Law Mathematics Philosophy Photography |
|--|---|--|---|

- Resits for GCSE will be limited to
 - English, English Language, Mathematics – June 2017
 - Sciences – June 2018
 - All other subjects – to be determined on a board by board basis as to whether a single resit opportunity will be given
- Resits for A level will be limited to one resit opportunity.

Key Objectives and Internal Directions policy for students up to and including KS4:

- The school aims for the majority of students to take at least 7, and ideally 8-10 GCSE subjects, if following a standard two-year teaching programme and if there are no health or other issues.
- For students embarking on an intensive one-year GCSE programme, which may well be remedial, the school aims for students to take at least 4, and ideally 5, core GCSE subjects.
- To reflect the school's commitment to providing an academically rigorous environment, all students are automatically placed on the Higher tier. This is subject to constant review by the student, tutor and Principal, with the Principal making the final decision as to whether it is in the student's best interests to be entered for the final exams in the Higher or Foundation tier. This decision will always be based on which tier will give the student the greatest chance of securing the highest GCSE grade they are capable of, and will be based upon assessment data provided by the teacher. Due to our flexible teaching programmes decisions relating to Foundation and Higher tier entries can be made right up the date of final examinations.
- The school places great emphasis on English, Maths and the sciences as well as basic numeracy and literacy skills. To this end, the school strongly encourages all students to take the following core subjects:

- Our KS4 courses are open to students of any age or ability including remedial or mature students, with these students being taught separately from the students of compulsory school age, and also being exempt mandatory PSHCE and sports sessions.
- Students are guaranteed entry into their chosen examination sessions subject to a good attendance record and work ethic.

Key Objectives for A Level students (Keystage 5):

- To maintain a strong academic ethos, the school requires all students to have a minimum of a B grade (Grade 5 with 9-1 GCSEs) at GCSE in the subject they wish to study at AS or A level. This reflects a careful balancing between meeting the desires of the students and ensuring that they are sufficiently academically equipped to tackle higher level courses.
- Exceptions to the above are A levels which do not require a GCSE foundation, namely: Psychology, Economics, Sociology, Business Studies, Government and Politics and Law. However, the school would want to ascertain that the student had sufficient core competencies to embark on an A level in these subjects, particularly in Mathematics and English.
- The school aims to provide a wide choice of subjects (please see above for a list of courses) and adequate guidance so that the choice of A levels matches the needs and requirements of courses at higher educational level. This careful educational and career guidance is provided by the Principal.
- As part of the school's commitment to academic excellence, students are provided with a comprehensive in-house programme (Uniprep) that includes detailed advice and guidance on how to apply to highly competitive universities such as Oxford and Cambridge, and degree courses such as Medicine, Dentistry and Law. Students will also receive specialist guidance on how to prepare for university admissions tests such as UKCAT, BMAT, LNAT, HAT, ELAT, TSA and others.
- Applications for these highly competitive degree courses are subject to the approval of the Principal, the reason for this being that a great deal of time in the first half of Year 13 needs to be devoted to the application process, and if a student has not met the requirements which the school deems to be necessary for success, it is not in the student's interests to be diverted from the main focus of their A level course.
- For Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine, the school application requirements are at least 7 passes at A*/A grade with no subjects lower than B grade. Sciences, Mathematics and English must all be at A grade. Appropriate and adequate work experience must also have been completed before entering their second year of the A level.

- For Oxford and Cambridge, the school application requirements are at least 8 passes at A*/A grade in GCSE, although applicants should ideally be offering 9, 10 or more GCSEs, all at grades A*-A. The student must also be able to demonstrate extensive reading/ study/research beyond the bounds of the A level syllabus before entering Year 13, and s/he must also be able to demonstrate aptitude in the critical thinking skills that are assessed in the relevant admissions test.
- All students who are called to interview at universities they have applied to will receive mock interview preparation which embrace both general interview skills and subject-specific questioning.
- For those students where English is not their first language, EAL support will be built into subject-specific teaching and additional EAL sessions will be timetabled according to students' levels and needs. For students who have not taken or achieved a C grade or higher in an English GCSE, IELTS preparation lessons will be built into their timetables, thereby ensuring that students have reach an appropriate level of competency in English for academic purposes prior to the end of their A level courses/ entry to university.
- Similar to entry to GCSE exams, A level students are guaranteed entry for their chosen examinations subject to a good attendance record and work ethic. Ability to pass the exams does not come into consideration. In situations where it is in dispute whether an A level student has made sufficient effort to be entitled to enter the examination, the Principal's decision is final. This decision will be based on attendance and punctuality statistics, class and homework output, and test/mock exam assessments.
- As part of the A level reforms introduced in 2015, the AS level became a standalone qualification to be taken midway through KS5 with the full A level at the end of KS5. At Westminster Tutors, our policy is to make decisions on whether to enter students for the AS level on a case by case basis. The AS level provides a summative assessment of the student's work over an academic year and can provide an important benchmark to assess progress and learning: for some students this may be necessary/ beneficial. In other cases, the AS level may be more of a diversion early in the summer term, meaning the student would benefit more from continuing on the linear A level course until the end of the summer term. Decisions will always be informed by what is felt to be in the best interests of the individual students, with the Principal's decision being final.
- If the student had been entered onto the full A level but in the second year of teaching, the teacher, in consultation with the SLT, determined that would be problematic for the student, a decision will be made as to whether the student should sit the AS paper instead.

Teaching and Learning

Students learn through not only being taught but also their experiences. They learn most effectively when they feel valued, are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and when they are actively involved in the learning process. The school aims to deploy a range of teaching and learning strategies in order to engage the student including working individually, in pairs and small groups (if possible), problem-solving, the use of ICT and other electronic media, and visits or other activities outside the classroom.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students underpins the school's teaching across the curriculum. Emphasis is placed on teaching which will motivate and inspire the students by fostering their curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, which in turn develops their capacity for independent life-long learning.

Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural Development and Fundamental British Values

In line with the revisions to the Independent School Standards which came into place in January 2015, the college is fully committed to supporting the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development (SMSC) of students both within and without lessons, and teachers are advised to incorporate SMSC into their curricular and lesson delivery at every opportunity. Specifically, the college is committed to the active promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is achieved in lessons whenever relevant issues and opportunities present themselves, through the delivery of the PSHCE programme which involves all students attending the college, as well as in the daily conduct and informal interaction of all staff and pupils at the college. Full details can be obtained from the college SMSC and PSHCE Policies.

Core Skills in Literacy and Numeracy

Core skills in literacy and numeracy will not only be developed through the study of English and Mathematics at GCSE and beyond, but also through a cross-curricular emphasis on literacy and numeracy which will increase the students' understanding of how these core skills have meaningful, relevant and practical applications in other subjects and in their wider lives. For example, reading strategies will be developed across the humanities curriculum, while the skills of problem-solving and

applying number will be practised and re-applied in the science curriculum. Writing skills, particularly writing in different contexts for different purposes, will receive a strong emphasis across the curriculum.

Homework

Regular and appropriate homework is a vital part of the students' learning experience at the school as well as key to measuring the student's progress in a given subject. Homework allows for the student to not only consolidate but also extend work covered in the lessons, thereby broadening and deepening the student's understanding of the course. It also facilitates independent research and provides the platform for student's to continue the good study habits encouraged during classes in the school. As a rule of thumb, students should expect to do at least the same number of homework as taught hours in each subject they are studying.

Management, Monitoring and Evaluation

At Westminster Tutors overall responsibility for the curriculum, as well as the day-to-day decisions rests with the Principal in consultation with the Directors of Studies, the College Registrar, the Examinations Officer, Heads of Department and subject teachers. Management will also include:

- Ensuring that the school curriculum is in line with the spirit of the National Curriculum and its assessment procedures;
- Ensuring that the college's curriculum delivery adheres to the principles and practices set out in the Westminster Tutors Equality Policy, and that teaching or any of the other day-to-day operations of the college do not discriminate against students in manner which is contrary to the Equality Act 2010
- Implementing the Special Educational Needs policy, which also includes guidance on provision for students with EAL and for Gifted and Talented students;
- Identifying students with special educational or other needs and ensuring that they are provided with support which enables them to gain full access to the curriculum;
- Implementing the SMSC, PSHCE, Sex and Relationships, Careers Education and policies;
- Responding to any complaints or requests from parents concerning the curriculum.

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