THE KING'S SCHOOL IN MACCLESFIELD

CURRICULUM POLICY (SENIOR DIVISIONS)

The King's curriculum is designed to meet the School's aims and objectives by providing an education which combines breadth with academic challenge. The School is committed to the highest standards of academic achievement, whilst recognising that pupils' talents and the rate at which they are able to make progress vary as they grow and develop. Our aim is to develop life-long learners and independent thinkers through a focus on promoting the key learning habits of collaboration, questioning, reasoning, resilience, reflection and creativity. The curriculum has been designed to help prepare our students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

This policy is supported by schemes of work drawn up by Heads of Department in collaboration with members of those departments.

The curriculum is organised so that every pupil is able to learn and to realise their full potential. The range and variety of the academic subjects offered is appropriate to the age of pupils and our aim to develop lively and enquiring minds. Teaching staff ensure that there is challenge for the most able; equally, the School also provides appropriately for those with specific learning needs through the Learning Support department (see the separate 'Learning Support: Special Educational Needs' policy).

It is expected that the majority of pupils will follow the full curriculum unless there are particular circumstances which mean that they would be better served by not doing so. This could be if they have a specific learning need or disability which is means that they would find it hard to fulfil their potential studying the full range of subjects in the curriculum. In some cases pupils can be withdrawn from certain subjects to receive specialist support and we have a 'flexible pathway' at GCSE. Pupils admitted other than at the main entry points of Year 7 and Year 9 may require a tailored academic programme and the School will endeavour to provide this.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS DEVELOPED

The curriculum offers a range of learning experiences to develop the skills listed below (skills are delivered across the curriculum, but the bracketed subjects take responsibility for monitoring standards):

- Literacy (including speaking and listening) and numeracy (English and Mathematics);
- proficiency in the use of technology (Computing and Design Technology);
- problem-solving and proficiency in scientific methods and investigations (Sciences)
- linguistic proficiency (French, German, Spanish);

- an appreciation of, and development of ability in the creative and expressive arts (Art, Drama and Music)
- proficiency in the knowledge of concepts, issues and applications in the Humanities (History and Geography)
- training in personal, inter-personal and social responsibility; the understanding and development of a respect for religious and moral values, for other people and, above all, for oneself (Compass and Religion and Philosophy)
- the development of the coordination of body and mind through a wide range of leisure and sporting activities (P.E and Games)
- the development of independent thought and study, and the active encouragement of a sense of curiosity and a spirit of enquiry and adventure (Philosophy for Children in Drama and R&P; independent projects, King's Outdoor Compass)

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION (KING'S COMPASS)

The King's School provides a programme of PSHE for its pupils to support their broader personal and social development. It has been developed with due regard to the ages and needs of pupils across the School. Responsibility for implementing and reviewing this programme rests with the Head of PSHE. From September 2022 the programme has been renamed 'King's Compass', although in terms of curriculum coverage it covers the formal requirements of a PSHE programme including Sex and Relationships Education.

King's Compass is concerned with the physical, mental, spiritual and economic well-being of the pupils in our school. It should enable our pupils to acquire and develop the thinking and inter-personal skills they need to make sense of, and then manage the world around them. It helps pupils to become effective learners and supports them as they become independent young people and active contributors to British society with a full appreciation of the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of this with different faiths and beliefs. It is a crucial part of our character-based ethos of education.

King's Compass plays an important role within the King's system of pastoral care and in fostering a friendly, polite and caring community, made up of well- rounded individuals who work well with others and who become increasingly responsible for their own learning and development. As such it delivers the school's aims.

The Compass programme aims to support pupils in:

- becoming confident and self-aware, appreciative of non-material aspects of life, and emotionally mature for their age;
- developing their sense of right and wrong, of respect for norms of good conduct, and of moral and ethical values;
- respecting English civil and criminal law and the democratic process;
- accepting responsibility, contributing to the society of the school and the world beyond, and developing social, political and economic awareness;
- understanding and respecting our common humanity, diversity and differences, appreciating and respecting their own and other cultures, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act;
- becoming increasingly able to form effective and fulfilling relationships as an essential part of their lives and learning.

As well as statutory PSHE lessons, King's Compass also includes outdoor learning in Years 7 and 8. Pairs of forms receive one double period per fortnight of outdoor learning using the King's site to explore lessons in bushcraft, problem-solving and team-building as part of their wider character development and sense of the wider natural world.

CAREERS GUIDANCE

As part of the process of widening pupil's awareness of opportunities in Higher Education and the world of work, the Careers Department provides a focus for information and individual support. The department fosters independent thought and co-operative learning, whilst developing pupils' awareness of the opportunities and changing nature of the modern world. Specifically, the department ensures that each student benefits from impartial, expert advice in both Careers Education Guidance and the identification/selection of Higher Education opportunities from a qualified Careers Adviser. This enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options, including apprenticeships, and in doing so helps them to realise their potential.

THE SENIOR SCHOOL CURRICULUM - PARTICULARS

The curriculum operates on a 60 period two-week cycle, with six periods per day of 50 minutes.

It provides a strong framework for future study, in that it

- encourages breadth of experience without sacrificing depth of understanding;
- combines traditional academic rigour with opportunities for self-expression and creativity
- emphasises independence and key learning habits
- offers a breadth of study and range of experience at Key Stage Three
- gives a range of choice to give a broad and balanced curriculum for GCSE;
- offers the chance for pupils to study the three science subjects as separate disciplines at GCSE
- allows the possibility of two languages being taken through to GCSE
- offers a wide choice of A level subjects

Key Stage Three: Years 7, 8 and 9

The aim of the curriculum in these years is to give pupils a sound basis on which to build for success at GCSE, together with a sound basic education in those subjects which they will not eventually study to GCSE. It aims to encourage the development of physical fitness and skills in competitive sport through the PE and Games programme, as well as an appreciation of the outdoors through the King's Compass programme.

Pupils follow a broad curriculum in Mathematics, English, Science, History, Geography, Religion and Philosophy, King's Compass (including outdoor learning), Physical Education, Computing, Design and Technology, Art and Design, Music, Drama and Games throughout the first three years of their time here.

Pupils have taster sessions in French, German and Spanish in the Autumn Term of Year 7 before choosing to continue with two from the Spring term until the end of Year 9. In Year 9, all pupils also follow two creative subjects from those studied in Years 7 and 8.

Pupils are placed in mixed ability forms on arrival in Year 7 and teaching is predominantly in these form groups in the first three years with some setting in English, Mathematics and languages after the first year.

Key Stage Four: Years 10 and 11

The majority of pupils study for either 9 or 10 GCSEs depending on their Science route. They must study Mathematics, English and English Literature, Science (as either Combined Science, leading to two GCSEs, or as three separate science GCSEs) a foreign language and a humanities subject. They also then choose two more subjects from: a second foreign language; History; Geography; Religion and Philosophy; Art and Design; Design and Technology; Music; Drama; Physical Education; Computer Science, Creative i-Media.

A small number study an adapted GCSE curriculum which we call our 'flexible pathway'. Some dyslexic students find language study harder and are given the option to select a subject other than a language as a reasonable adjustment for their needs. Some students follow a slightly reduced curriculum which reduces their load and allows for some more support in English and Mathematics.

In addition to the formally examined curriculum, all pupils pursue an activities programme involving some time spent on various competitive sports and also some non-competitive recreational activities involving physical exercise. They also follow the King's Compass programme in both years.

Key Stage Five: Years 12 and 13

The majority of students prepare for three subjects freely chosen from Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English Literature, English Language, Geography, History, Politics, French, German, Spanish, Economics, Business, Religious Studies (Philosophy and Ethics), Art, Music, Computing, Technology, Sport and Psychology. The curriculum is also differentiated, as whilst most subjects are A Level, we also offer C-TECs in Business and Digital Media and BTEC Sport qualifications for those students where it is felt appropriate. A small number of very able students, including Further Mathematicians, are allowed to study for four A levels. Teaching groups are arranged according to subject choices.

All students pursue a course of sporting and/or recreational activities throughout the Sixth Form which include playing in a school sports team, playing individual or group recreational sport, helping with a local special needs school, participating in a community action programme, helping with the school enrichment programme for younger pupils or developing skills in art, drama or music. They also have tutorial periods during which they follow a Compass/Careers programme with occasional visiting speakers.

As part of our commitment to a breadth of study, there is also an Extended Studies programme in both Year 12 and Year 13. In Year 12, this is for those students studying 3 A Levels, who study the EPQ for 4 periods per fortnight. This is a course which develops their research and independent study skills and makes excellent preparation for independent study beyond A Level. In Year 13, they then take a course in some aspect of the Extended Studies programme for four periods, which offers a choice of one-year qualifications such as Japanese and Theatre Studies or a carousel of interest-only subjects taken for a half-term each.

VARIATION FROM THE NORMAL CURRICULUM PATH

In the event of a pupil's parents requesting that they be allowed to drop a subject, the decision will be taken by the Deputy Head (Academic) in consultation with the Principal of the relevant division, the Head of Learning Support and the relevant class teacher and Head of Department. This decision will be based on classroom performance and assessments as well as consultation with parents and reference to any relevant literature such as Educational Psychologists' reports. Where it is felt that it would be in the pupil's interests to drop a subject, they would then use the time they have gained under the supervision of the Learning Support Department receiving specialist support.

Author: Deputy Head (Academic)

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