



DULWICH PREP LONDON
Values & Academic Excellence since 1885

CURRICULUM POLICY

This is a whole school policy which applies to all sections of the School, including Early Years.



Person responsible for this policy:

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CURRICULUM POLICY

CONTEXT

This policy exists in reference to the:

- Admissions Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Form Tutoring Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Professional Development Tube Map and Guidance for Staff
- SEND Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Teacher Toolkit

It also works in collaboration with Knowledge Organisers and the Curriculum planning documents available for Sections and Departments.

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the curriculum at Dulwich Prep London continues to maintain, and is renowned for, its breadth and excellence. The school has a long-established history of giving pupils in attendance a broad curriculum that goes beyond the basics, stretches the individual academically and holistically, and equips them for an ever-changing world.

2. AIMS AND ETHOS

Dulwich Prep London aims to ensure all community members:

- feel safe and secure;
- uphold the Dulwich Prep London Values;
- develop Excellent Learning characteristics; and
- have high expectations and are rigorous in maintaining excellence.

Furthermore, the Prep aims to ensure that pupils:

- achieve success in reaching their potential;
- are recognised for their successes in any subject;

- are passionate about learning and undertake it with increasing independence;
- develop intellectual rigour and become excellent communicators; and
- are successful in attaining places at future senior schools that are both the right fit and challenge the pupil appropriately.

We ensure that every pupil's education has continuity and, wherever possible, is personalised to their needs. We match the pupil and the tasks he or she is asked to undertake, knowing that pupils leave the school to numerous destination schools (around 40 schools, on average, per year).

We recognise the crucial role that parents and carers play in their child's progress and encourage parental involvement along the way, however, we also expect parents to trust in our professional judgement and to avoid overly intensive support when asked to do so.

We value the contribution that children and families from different backgrounds, cultures and religious groups can make to our learning community and encourage families to let us know if they have specific interests that may benefit broader curriculum contribution.

In addition to teaching a broad curriculum with a balanced content, it is the aim to help individuals develop a wide range of transferable skills which will enable them to have a stronger sense of their individuality. The education provided is challenging, rigorous and supportive.

3. EXCELLENT LEARNING

We have our own way of supporting pupils to improve their metacognitive skills. We are the hub for 'Excellent Learning' as developed by a member of our senior leadership team, Dr Ruth Burtonshaw. Excellent Learning recognises twelve key characteristics of learning, works to assess pupils' confidence in those skills, and our teaching and learning seeks to improve their competence in utilising those twelve skills to enable them to learn effectively.

The characteristics are:

• Linking	• Organising
• Creating	• Enjoying
• Persevering	• Discovering
• Thinking	• Communicating
• Playing	• Willing
• Memorising	• Focusing

4. EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM PROVISION

There is a Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf

The Early Years Foundation Stage is distinct in its identity. The curriculum is therefore planned in accordance with the latest expectations. There are seven areas of learning.

The three prime areas are:

- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

We also support pupils in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The four specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.

The Early Years Section (Nursery and Reception) is based on our Gallery Road site with specifically designed classrooms and resources to support pupils in those year groups. Pupils have access to an extensive playground, a field and a woodland in which to undertake outdoor learning activities that complement the framework. In addition, every classroom has its own outdoor learning space to complement continuous and enhanced provision and the pupils have access to four acres of playing fields that are for their sole use during school hours.

Pupils attending our Early Years receive teaching on a staffing ratio of 1:8 with a maximum of 24 in a class. Specialist teaching is in place for Music and Physical Education.

Phonics is taught using the *Read, Write, Inc.* scheme, and pupils are assessed and taught according to their needs. Pupil progress is reviewed on a six-weekly basis.

Further details of the Early Years curriculum provision along with half termly plans are available from the Head of Section for Early Years.

5. THE CURRICULUM JOURNEY FROM PRE-PREP TO YEAR 8

a. Years 1-2 (Pre-Prep)

The Pre-Prep is in a separate building on the Alleyn Park site, housing classrooms and a hall that are solely for the use of Years 1 and 2. Class sizes do not exceed 20 and all classes have a Teaching Assistant. The Year 1 classrooms all have direct access to the outdoor space and enable indoor-outdoor learning as part of the transition from Reception. The learning does, however, become more formal as expectations of pupils are significantly increased in order to maintain momentum and ensure that pupils are ready for the next section of the school.

The Year 2 classrooms are along the first-floor corridor and this is an environment that prepares pupils for moving to Lower School.

The curriculum is organised and planned for, using a thematic approach, through which many subjects are taught. This approach to teaching and learning is designed to support pupils' natural curiosity and stimulate their creativity. Pupils are predominantly taught in mixed ability groupings.

Phonics continues to be taught (as with the Early Years) via the *Read, Write, Inc.* programme, although many pupils are expected to have completed this by the end of Year 1. Pupils undertake the programme three days per week; on the remaining two days per week pupils practise extended writing, based on the theme of the term or half term, integrated into the weekly lessons.

Maths is taught using White Rose resources to ensure breadth, depth, and mastery. The White Rose programme gives pupils the time needed to reflect, consolidate and transfer their learning.

There are strong links between all of the subjects and pupils see their work as being connected, relevant and purposeful. The creative curriculum is skills-based and supported by knowledge, ensuring creativity is built on strong foundations. The pupils also undertake trips locally to ensure their learning is understood as relevant and contextualised within the real world.

The pupils remain predominantly in their classrooms. However, they have specialist language, music, computing, PSHCE, swimming and PE tuition that may from time to time take them away from their classroom. Teachers may also use the spaces outside the classroom and in the playgrounds for learning activities where appropriate.

Evening Prep consists of a short period of time reading, doing spelling, handwriting and undertaking tasks to revise basic number knowledge and times tables.

b. Years 3-4 (Lower School)

The Lower School is housed in one clearly defined wing of the Alleyn Park site and class sizes do not exceed 20. The facilities include classrooms over two floors and a specifically designed Lower School Hall. Lower School has a designated play area known as 'The Fort' where learning activities may take place.

It is at this stage in a pupil's development that they begin to learn how to research independently and, where appropriate, we encourage each pupil to do so using a range of resources. All pupils are provided with their own iPad for use in class as seen fit by the teacher. The pupil accesses a range of resources via the iPad including apps that complement the learning and the curriculum devised by the

school. Pupils also access the main school Library, along with the Lower School Library, the art room, the sports hall, the music studio (Tippett), the concert hall, the DT laboratory and the cookery suite for specialist lessons.

The curriculum is broadly taught in discrete lessons with the specialisation of skills and subject knowledge that accompany them. Lessons continue to be mainly with the class teacher.

Prep focuses on reading and is then accompanied by learning the 'Voyages in Vocabulary' keywords and learning and consolidation of mental maths. There are then optional 'Topic Takeaways' that allow pupils to undertake a menu of smaller and larger tasks associated with and complementary to the thematic study of the term.

c. Years 5-6 (Middle School)

The Middle School operates across the remainder of the school site and class sizes do not exceed 20 unless there are exceptional circumstances. Year 5 has a designated corridor that is next to the Lower School and eases them into the busy Middle and Upper School environment of subject specialism explained below.

The curriculum is increasingly specialised from this age range onwards. Pupils have access to the full breadth of the specialist teaching in school and we introduce steadily the movement of pupils to different classrooms and specialist environments during the course of these two years to allow pupils to acquire the confidence of moving around with older pupils, organising their equipment and packing their book bag with the correct books for the lessons of the day.

The tutor system is introduced to pupils in Year 5. As this is a significant adjustment for both families and pupils, there are two tutors allocated to Years 5 and 6 (a 1:10 teacher-pupil ratio). This enables tutors to get to know pupils quickly and to understand both their academic and pastoral needs. The Head of Section is the same across Lower and Middle School to smooth the journey for both pupil and parent across these processes and to ensure that knowledge regarding the pupil is transferred fully in handovers between class teachers who will have spent continuous time with the pupils to Tutors who will meet and greet the pupils at the start of every day.

Given that many pupils may sit a Pre-Test or 11+ and that this tends to occur during the Year 6 period of October to February, specialist lessons exist to support pupils to prepare for the range of tasks that they may be required to undertake through this senior school admissions process. We are, however, extremely mindful of the need for balance and the breadth of the curriculum during the school day is maintained to enable pupils to understand their own mental health, the importance of physical exercise and explore strategies for calming and meditation to balance what can be an extremely busy period in their educational journey.

The majority of pupils undertake a Pre-Test and stay on until Year 8, upon completing Middle School.

d. Years 7-8 (Upper School)

The Upper School is set on the Alleyn Park site and pupils are in classes of as little as 12 and never more than 20 unless there are exceptional circumstances. Pupils receive increasingly personalised support at this stage depending upon their intended route to senior school and whether they continue to undertake admissions processes.

The curriculum is now wholly specialised and ensures that pupils are taught by qualified specialists in all subjects. The tutor system utilised in Middle School continues with single tutors and pupils are given plenty of support from both their tutors and from their subject teachers to enable them to prepare fully for senior school.

Dulwich Prep London ensures that it far exceeds Key Stage National Curriculum objectives, is often beyond the pace and expectations of the Common Entrance curriculum, and embeds the foundations for many GCSE subjects.

6. WAYS OF LEARNING

At Dulwich Prep London, we acknowledge that pupils learn differently and we recognise that they will need the skills to utilise different methods for learning and our Excellent Learning characteristics enable the pupil to develop and assess their competencies in those areas.

Complementing these are the different approaches that our teaching staff will use to engage pupils with the breadth of resources available to them. These methods are deployed throughout the pupil's journey, keeping learning interesting and also developing a plethora of opportunities and ways in which to engage pupils with content. However, this is carefully reviewed to ensure that pupils are not overwhelmed with either the content or the complexity of the presentation of the information available to them. Pupils are equipped with the 'how to' as well as the 'what and why'.

Teaching staff will include many methods (although not exhaustive) from the list below:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> partner discussion/ pair & share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fieldwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> preview activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> group activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> literature summaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> role play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> oral presentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> whole-class instruction & response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen and response activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> revision summaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> manipulation of concrete, pictorial and abstract resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> planning via mind-maps / lists / bullet points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive IT resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consolidation activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> design, make, do, review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unscaffolded investigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuous provision to enhance / embed adult-led learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reading and responding to other pupils' work to build pupil confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> jigsawing/ carousels/ conscience corridors/

We encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn and what makes it difficult for them to learn. Pupils are involved in self-review and peer review throughout the school.

7. EFFECTIVE TEACHING

We appoint highly qualified and specialist staff, provide first-rate teaching facilities and CPD, and create a positive and supportive learning ambiance. All teaching staff are provided with our Teacher Toolkit that sets out a clear reminder of the basic standards released by the Department for Education, together with our Standards for Excellence in our Teacher Toolkit. The Teacher Toolkit sets the standard for excellence and outlines the different ways that staff can feel confident in their planning, presentation, and engagement with pupils in the classroom.

Our Professional Tutor is in charge of induction for new teachers, NQTs, and any staff on a GTP programme. These staff are supported extremely well and in accordance with an agreed procedure. They also have a Mentor and a Buddy allocated to them during their first year.

The Professional Tutor is also in charge of organising training and development for all staff.

The Annual Development Plan (ADP), an internal plan that sets out the expectations of the school, its areas for development and next steps, will always have a strand dedicated to teaching and learning. This is shared with all staff both digitally and during Inset to ensure that every member of staff is aware of expectations upon them in regards to delivering the very best in professional teaching.

When teaching we focus on motivating the pupils and building on their skills and the transference of these skills, abilities, knowledge, and understanding. We use the school's ADP and aims to guide our teaching.

All teaching begins with assessment data gathered on the pupils either from their entry point or from the previous stage of their journey with us. All staff are expected to have accessed, understood, conferred on, and planned on the basis of data available on each pupil to improve that pupil's achievement and progress with us.

We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each pupil's level of ability. We have high expectations of all pupils, and we believe that their learning at Dulwich Prep London should enable them to fulfil their highest possible potential. This is expected to be at the forefront of every teacher's mind in preparing and delivering lessons and in responding to resulting assignments, activities, essays, or revision exercises.

We evaluate lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future. Every member of the teaching staff makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with the pupils they teach and we put significant emphasis on the need to build rapport. The behaviour policy exists first and foremost to enable staff to consistently and fairly recognise pupils for their efforts and achievements. At times, however, the policy provides the framework to enforce sanctions that maintain high standards in the teaching environment. We insist on good behaviour for learning as a non-negotiable and all staff are expected to respond and utilise the behaviour policy accordingly.

Staff are expected to attend a suite of in-house training activities and are encouraged to carve their own professional development journey assisted by Dulwich Prep London's provision of BlueSky to record their engagement with professional learning and to document their own personal areas of strength and development. The Dulwich Prep London's 'tube map' of possible learning routes also exists within the Professional Development guide that is released annually to staff.

8. DIFFERENTIATION

To ensure every pupil is given equal opportunity, differentiation occurs throughout the school as a means of personalising the pupil's journey with us, enabling them to have full access to the curriculum.

It can be most clearly observed in the delivery of lessons.

Differentiation will be evident in every lesson through one or more of the following methods:

- task set;
- teacher input and assistance;
- levels of scaffolding;
- provision of resources;
- outcome;
- enrichment opportunities both in and out of lessons;
- questioning to stimulate deeper learning and understanding;
- learning objectives;
- streaming or setting;
- extra-curricular provision; and
- skills and strategies support including staff access to each pupil's Edukey passport where appropriate.

Each Early Years and Pre-Prep class benefits from either an EYP or a teaching assistant whose role is to assist with the pastoral welfare and academic progress of the pupils. This affords the class teacher the flexibility to plan for supported differentiated work within the classroom as necessary. Pupils with identified learning needs may at times receive specialised support, in part to enable them to access their learning. All teachers are aware of these pupils and it is their responsibility to provide pupils with the support that they need. Dulwich Prep London strives to ensure that there is appropriate support for all teachers to meet the learning needs of all pupils.

9. ACHIEVEMENT

We reward our pupils for their positive endeavours, be they related to academic achievement, progress, effort, or acts of kindness and good citizenship in accordance with the behaviour policy for each section of the school. Achievement and progress within the curriculum may be recognised in relation to the Excellent Learning characteristics (e.g. excellent Learning stickers or quarter slips); for positive behaviour and acts of kindness the school values may be referenced (e.g. values certificates). A range of awards and certificates for achievements gained in school and outside are presented during assemblies. These celebrations and awards are, in the main, detailed in our Behaviour policy and in the specific Section appendices.

The overriding premise however is to catch pupils putting in effort and so awards should always significantly outnumber sanctions. However, it should also be clear that professional judgment is used more readily than working to any numerical indicators or benchmarks, particularly where specific needs are concerned. Similarly, where a pupil is incurring multiple sanctions from multiple teachers, benchmarking is no longer appropriate as the pupil may be receiving additional interventions or being escalated through the sanctions.

10. SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING TEACHERS THROUGH CURRICULUM REVIEWS

We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice. Teachers are appraised every year in accordance with our Professional Development guidelines. Any development needs are addressed by training arranged internally, by target setting or through courses run by external providers.

Curriculum Reviews

Curriculum Reviews are run by the Head Master, Deputy Head Teaching and Learning and by the relevant Heads of Department. Subject coordinators through the sections are also involved in the subject review process for subjects where these exist. The Reviews usually take two to three days depending on the department. The Review entails lesson observations, book and digital content reviews and looks at the teaching of a subject across the entirety of the school. Information gathering is done across all sections of the school to ensure that there is continuity in coverage and skills taught and that the curriculum spirals to enable the year on year accumulation of pupil confidence. The reviews culminate in a manageable number of agreed development targets for the subject and / or department.

Staff Meetings & HoD Meetings

There are departmental meetings and staff meetings at which curriculum issues can be raised and good practice shared. In the Early Years, Pre-Prep and Lower School sections, whole staff meetings at which curriculum issues can be raised are held weekly. Most of the curriculum planning takes place in weekly year group meetings. In the Upper School, departmental staff meetings take place at which curriculum issues can be discussed. These run alongside whole section meetings and HoD meetings at which curriculum issues are discussed on alternate weeks.

11. SUBJECTS STUDIED BY SECTION (FROM PRE-PREP TO UPPER SCHOOL)

Subjects Studied in the Pre-Prep and Lower School:

	Pre-Prep (Y1&2)	Lower School (Y3&4)
English	✓	✓
Phonics	✓	
Mathematics	✓	✓
Science	✓	✓
French	✓ (Half the year)	✓ (Half the year)
Spanish	✓ (Half the year)	✓ (Half the Year)
RS	✓ (Half the Year)	✓ (Half the Year)
Geography	✓ (within a topic)	✓ (within a topic)
History	✓ (within a topic)	✓ (within a topic)

PE	✓	✓
Swimming	✓	✓
Art	✓	✓
DT	✓	✓
Drama	✓	✓
ICT / Computing	✓	✓
Games	✓	✓
VR		✓
PSHCE	✓	✓
Music	✓	✓
Music Theory		✓
Relax Kids	✓	
Philosophy		✓

These subjects are mostly delivered by a class teacher. The pupils stay with them for most of the school day. Drama, Music, French / Spanish, Swimming, ICT, Games, PE and PSHCE are taught by subject specialists in the Pre-Prep. Drama, Music, French / Spanish, Swimming, ICT, Games and PE are taught by specialist staff in the Lower School.

Subjects Studied in the Middle and Upper School:

The breadth and coverage of key areas of the curriculum is monitored carefully to ensure that where there are pinch points that the curriculum does not get squeezed due to the pressure of looming exams.

	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
English	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mathematics	✓	✓	✓	✓
Science	✓	✓	✓	✓
French	✓	✓ (or Spanish)	✓ (or Spanish)	✓ (or Spanish)
Spanish	✓	✓ (or French)	✓ (or French)	✓ (or French)
Latin		✓	✓ (most continue)	✓ (most continue)

RS	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geography	✓	✓	✓	✓
History	✓	✓	✓	✓
PE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Swimming	✓	✓	✓	✓
Art	✓	✓	✓	✓
DT	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drama	✓	✓	✓	✓
ICT	✓	✓	✓	✓
Games	✓	✓	✓	✓
VR / NVR	✓	✓		✓ (day schools)
PSHCE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Music	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wellbeing	✓	✓		
Philosophy	✓			
Mindfulness		✓		✓
Current Affairs	✓			

These are delivered by subject specialists. The boys move around the school to accommodation designed for the delivery of the subjects.

12. CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Dulwich Prep London runs a huge number of co-curricular clubs and activities each week – there were almost 150 clubs last year. All pupils and staff members from Year 1 upwards are encouraged to participate. Some are by invitation only, such as musical groups or sports squads but the vast majority are open to any interested pupil.

In Years 1 and 2, most clubs run during the school day. Years 3 and 4 have a creative club rotation within the school day as well as clubs which run before and after school. From Year 5 onwards, a number of clubs run from 4.00 – 5.00 pm in addition to those before and within the school day.

There is usually no additional charge for clubs unless an external instructor is used, for example, LED Light Sabre, Karate, Fencing, Percussion, Chess, Rock Climbing or Gymnastics.

The range of activities is huge and reflects links to many areas of the curriculum. They may be derived from staff interests and expertise, but are also reflective of pupil or parental interests.

ALL ROUNDER AWARD

Co-curricular activities are extremely well supported by pupils and are an integral part of our All Rounder Award in Middle and Upper School. Boys in Years 5 to 8 are encouraged to participate in a broad range of clubs. Pupils choose from Sport, Music, Creative, Academic and Cognitive Enrichment categories. Those who cover the full spectrum and demonstrate an excellent level of commitment throughout the year will then be recognised with the appropriate All Rounder badge, striving to earn all four in their time at DPL.

Indicative booklets of the clubs available from in from Years 2-8 can be found here: [Pre-Prep Clubs \(Year 2\)](#); [Lower School Clubs Booklet](#); [Middle and Upper Schools Clubs Booklet 2020-21](#);

Visits out of school range from day visits to numerous locations and centres in the local area beginning in Year 1, to fully residential experiences beginning in Year 3. The costs of all these visits are covered through fees. There are also extra-curricular trips which are chargeable separately.

All experiences are carefully planned to enrich the curricular activities in school. A wide range of enrichment activities supplement the timetabled curriculum. Regular themed days, for instance to celebrate Book Week, and holding a 'Fun Day' to raise money for charity are held. Other themed events take place by arrangement with the Head Master. Pupils have the opportunity to attend day visits to places of interest on a regular basis and visiting speakers regularly supplement the curriculum. This serves to complement the academic curriculum taught.

13. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Learning Environments at Dulwich Prep London are expected to be inviting places, organised in a way that enables pupils to learn effectively. Descriptions of the learning environment through each section of the school can be found in section 5.

We believe that a calm, organised yet stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting learning environment promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the pupils.

The school has its own designated music school, three specialist science laboratories, a large central library (as well as smaller libraries in sections), an ICT suite, a sports hall, a swimming pool, Art rooms and DT suite, 25 acres of playing fields, woodland and outdoor spaces, playgrounds, excellent dining facilities and several multi use performance and assembly spaces.

The learning environment is of prime importance if we are to ensure that all learners are safe, secure, possess a sense of belonging and are confident at school.

Through our PSHCE curriculum we prepare pupils to learn in an environment in which they feel safe and confident.

The school aims to provide a happy, caring and safe environment in which the spiritual, moral and physical development of each pupil is promoted. The pupils will be encouraged to behave in a responsible manner, both to themselves and others, showing respect for their learning environments at all times.

Pupil voice is considered important and we run the PASS annually to ensure that our pupils feedback on their learning. We encourage pupils to express their ideas about school and to suggest ways that the environment can evolve through formal school council meetings as well as more informal methods. DPL Download provides every pupil from Yrs 5-8 with a weekly opportunity to feedback via an online questionnaire on matters ranging from changes they would make to school life to their own wellbeing and personal highs and lows.

14. INCLUSION

At Dulwich Prep London we value pupils' uniqueness, we listen to the views of individual pupils and we promote respect for diverse cultures. We have a specific set of 8 Values (which build upon the 5 Golden Values in the Early Years) which underpins all that we do and a policy for Equality and Diversity that further supports pupils in our Dulwich Prep community to have access to the breadth of the Dulwich Prep offer.

15. THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNORS

The Governors determine, support, monitor and review all statutory policies including this policy.