



# Solefield School

## **CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY**

This overarching policy includes the following:

- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Independent Learning Policy

### **Curriculum Policy**

Solefield School's curriculum provides full-time supervised education for boys aged 4 to 13. It is unashamedly focused on the individual and is designed to get the most out of every boy, giving them the opportunity to learn and make progress. The policy, schemes of work, lesson plans and delivery take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan. The policy, Solefield's curriculum, schemes of work, lesson plans and delivery do not seek to 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.

We emphasise core skills for younger pupils. In Reception we base our curriculum on the following areas of learning:

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Physical Development
3. Communication and language
4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the world
7. Expressive Arts and design

Specialist teachers deliver French, Art, Music (including Violins), ICT and PE in the Reception year.

In the Pre-Prep a traditional curriculum is adopted focusing on literacy, numeracy, speaking and listening, creativity and critical thinking. This is continued throughout the Senior School; all boys also take Thinking Skills and PPE from Year 4 and there is the opportunity to take Latin. Whilst the National Curriculum is a useful starting point each department will adapt and enhance their programme of study to motivate, inspire and challenge every boy.

Solefield School's curriculum gives boys experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. It allows boys to acquire skills in speaking

and listening, literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is designed to provide lessons with subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of the boys, including those boys with learning difficulties, a statement or those deemed academically more able and talented. Where a boy has a statement, the education provided fulfils its requirements.

The school provides Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) which reflects the school's aims and ethos and allow all boys to have the opportunity to learn and make progress. This includes citizenship, sex and relationships education, alcohol and drugs awareness. In Years 7 & 8, boys receive access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner. This enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options and helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

The RSHE curriculum encourages respect for other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation).

The school ensures that all boys have the opportunity to learn and make progress with staff who are constantly looking for opportunities that will allow the boys to shine. Classes are small and of mixed ability so individuals can obtain the help they need. Our Learning Development Department, led by the Director of Learning Development, works closely with the class teachers.

In addition to the core subjects of English, Maths and Science boys learn French from Reception and have the option of studying Latin from Year 7. The Humanities and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) are an integral part of the curriculum throughout the school, as are Art, Music, PE and Games which are taught by specialists. Boys from Year 4 upwards study Thinking Skills and PPE to develop critical thinking and oracy skills, as well as an appropriate understanding of current affairs. All boys are strongly encouraged to learn a musical instrument. ICT, again taught by specialists, is embedded in the curriculum from the start of Reception. Boys also enjoy a Wellbeing Lesson every week, led by their Form Teacher for reflection, relaxation and giving time with our Wellbeing Dogs and in the Lego Therapy Room.

The basis of our approach to learning is:

- instilling in the boys a joy for learning and a desire to do their best
- providing the best possible all-round education
- developing enthusiasm created by encouragement
- setting motivational yet achievable goals
- providing effective preparation of boys for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society
- developing in every boy the values, skills and behaviours they need to get on in life. All boys receive a rich provision of classroom and extra-curricular activities that develop a range of character attributes, such as resilience and grit, which underpin success in education and employment.

Our aim is to prepare the boys as well as possible for the next stage of their development and schooling and for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. By Years 7 and 8 the curriculum is planned largely, though not entirely, according to the CE and scholarship requirements of the leading Independent Senior Schools. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 follow our "Enquiring Minds" cross-curricular Humanities programme, developing skills for life such as research, use of the Internet, collaboration and presentation skills. Each pupil in Year 7 and 8 also undertakes our "Scholarship Path" in his own preferred area, choosing from Art, Drama and Music, Sport or Academic. Pupils are guided through this process by their subject leader and mentor. They develop a range of skills in their chosen area to a very high level and undertake visits to theatres, galleries and senior schools, mixing with other pupils of similar abilities. Through this, we hope to develop not only their natural talents, but also independence, resilience, perseverance, love of challenge, study skills for life and a thirst for learning, whether they take a formal scholarship exam for their chosen senior school or not.

This procedure is applicable to all boys in the school including those in the Reception class.

## Careers

Careers advice is given to pupils aged 10 and a half and above through the RSHE curriculum, assemblies, form time, Thinking Allowed talks with visiting speakers and the Post Exam Programme. It covers a broad range of opportunities and is delivered in an impartial way making clear that all career paths are open to all and preventing all forms of stereotyping. The curriculum requires pupils to reflect on their own strengths and likes, and to aim high and have high expectations of themselves.

The statutory guidance for the state sector which gives a detailed explanation of parallel duties for state schools is also followed: *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers 2018*

## Teaching & Learning Policy

The School's aims and objectives guide the members of the School community towards providing "**top quality teaching**". The aims and purpose of the school inform this policy. It is these foundations which will guide how we live, learn and educate at Solefield School and therefore they should be in evidence in all that we do. Teaching and learning will permeate every area of school life. This procedure is applicable to all parts of the school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception class).

### **Quality Teaching:**

- enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make the best progress possible according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
- fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
- involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
- shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
- demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
- utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
- demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;
- utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;

- does 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;
- does not discriminate against pupils contrary to Part 6 of the Equality Act 2010;
- delivers well-planned, prepared and paced lessons that maintain high levels of interaction with the class;
- identifies individual strengths and needs;
- identifies the learning objective so boys know what they are expected to learn;
- provides feedback both written and verbal with high levels of praise and encouragement;
- always has high expectations of boys;
- uses a variety of teaching styles;
- fosters an inquiring mind leading to confidence and initiative taking;
- encourages self-reflection, assessment and target setting;
- facilitates and supports peer evaluation;
- creates a supportive learning environment;
- uses homework effectively, particularly to reinforce and extend what is learned in school.

#### **Quality Learning:**

- maintains active involvement in learning to engage boys' interests;
- encourages boys to take responsibility for their own learning and listening skills;
- encourages interaction and collaboration from boys, teachers and parents.

#### **In order to achieve both quality teaching and learning, teaching staff:**

- identify and share learning objectives;
- review and reinforce previous learning to link and consolidate material;
- use a variety of teaching styles and learning activities;
- use differentiation to enable all boys to succeed;
- use marking and assessment to inform and involve boys in their learning.
- regularly share ideas and best practice;
- attend regular CPD;
- ask for, and act upon, feedback from the pupils.

#### **Assessment Policy**

Assessment is the means by which the progress of pupils is monitored. It is also a tool to inform curriculum planning.

#### **Why do we assess?**

- to define each child's ability: what the child knows, understands and can apply;
- to reveal children's strengths and weaknesses;
- to ensure early identification of children with S.E.N or those deemed to be gifted or talented in a particular area of the school curriculum;
- to inform future planning;
- to ensure continuity and progression in the work of the boys;
- to ensure teachers are teaching all boys effectively;
- to communicate accurate information about boys that is useful to teachers, pupils, parents, and other educational agencies;
- to allow pupils to reflect upon their own learning and set targets for future learning.

## Strategies for assessment:

- observation - watching the boys on task;
- questioning/discussion with the boys;
- photographing/videoing/audio taping work in progress;
- scrutinising boys' written work;
- marking boys' work, according to the marking policy;
- teacher devised tests and examinations;
- self-assessment;
- peer- assessment;
- standardised tests.

## Planning for assessment

Assessment is built into planning and takes place in the marking of routine work during a topic as well as in each half term's work or at the end of a topic.

## Record Keeping

In Reception, a baseline assessment (PiPs) is taken at the start and end of the year to monitor progress.

For all year groups, records are kept as follows:

- Individual teacher mark books
- Copies of reports are put into individual pupil records on the school network
- Central recording of Verbal and Non-Verbal test scores, Progress Test in English, Progress Test in Mathematics and Progress Test in Science scores on the school's Tracking Document (Years 3 and 5 sit the CAT test in the Spring Term instead of Verbal and Non-Verbal tests for these years)
- Spelling and Reading ages are recorded on the Tracking Document (Years 1-8)
- Central recording of Exam Scores and Term Marks are entered into shared files on the school network (Year 4 – 8).
- Pupils complete a piece of writing that is moderated and marked using "Solefield Levels" by the English Department twice a year. These scores are recorded on the Tracker document.
- A separate tracker document records the level of progress made by each pupil, as well as their annual scores. In this way, the progress of each child is closely monitored, not just their attainment.

## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Assessment should reflect the school policy on SEN. All boys are monitored and any individual who is a 'cause for concern' is highlighted on the tracking document as not working at age appropriate level. All boys that require additional support are identified on the class provision map. This shows the provision in place that is "additional to" and "different from" that which is offered through the school's differentiated curriculum. The provision maps are reviewed termly and used to evaluate the effectiveness of SEN support. Boys who receive 1:1 learning support lessons to help with literacy difficulties are assessed twice a year to monitor progress in reading and spelling.

Pupils for extension in any area are identified via testing, teacher recommendations and consultation with parents. Staff set appropriate work and they are seen regularly in small groups for extension. These boys are identified clearly on lesson plans. A list is held centrally and is reviewed regularly as a staff.

## Analysis

Analysis of assessment data is made by:

- individual form teachers who will liaise with their colleagues. In particular this information is discussed in September to enable the smooth transition of boys from one year group to the next.
- individual departments in curriculum group meetings
- the SENCo brings to the attention of the Deputy Head any boys who are not performing in line with expectations
- the whole staff in staff meetings

### **Use of Assessment Analysis**

The school uses and acts upon the data collected via assessment in a number of ways including:

- identifying pupils with SEN or who are gifted or talented and referring them to the school's SENCO or Deputy for further investigation and additional help if necessary
- putting boys on Target Report
- alerting the staff to monitor a particular boy

### **Reporting to Parents**

One of the strengths of Solefield School is the link between school and parents. If there are issues raised about a boy's performance through assessment, staff will contact the parents and discuss them. Parents are also kept informed of their son's progress by means of parents' evenings and written reports.

### **Independent Learning Policy**

**"A lot of people never use their initiative because no-one told them to." Banksy**

In order to be able to thrive in the modern world, at Solefield, we strive to help learners to develop their abilities to learn rather than to be taught. Pupils should have an understanding of their learning, be motivated to take responsibility for their learning and work with teachers to structure their learning environment.

Independent learning does not merely involve pupils working alone. Teachers play an important role in enabling and supporting independent learning. Learning independently develops a lifelong ability to adapt and to grow. Learners do not just teach themselves, but develop the skills needed to research, reflect and evaluate their own learning in order to identify and seek the support they need to progress.

Common strategies throughout the school will enable learners to apply independent learning strategies consistently and ever more effectively.

The ability to work independently clearly takes time to develop. It is often most effective when combined with support from home and at Solefield, we write to parents regularly to engage their support in this.

Some key aspects of any definition of independence are:

- Understanding what you are learning/expected to do
- Choice

- Reflection
- Asking for appropriate support when needed
- Research skills
- Accountability

At Solefield, we aim to do the following in order to promote Independent Learning. They are in no particular order.

- Set tasks that encourage students to collaborate.
- Make sure that success criteria are clear.
- Have examples of high level work available and “model” this.
- Set clear deadlines.
- Give students plenty of practice in “chunking” big tasks or projects.
- Ensure that resources are easily accessible and clearly organised.
- Establish routines such as “Ask three before me”.
- Set up “How-to” resources for frequently-asked questions.
- Ask questions such as “How do you think we can approach this task/problem?”
- Encourage useful interaction by using high level questioning.
- Try to set tasks which have a real audience.
- Encourage students to evaluate resources.
- Encourage students to share references and links to other resources they have found.
- Encourage students to problem-solve for themselves and to “discover” key information.
- Encourage students to think laterally – we have open-ended questions that are shared amongst the whole school and use the challenge questions from Discovery Espresso frequently with forms. Our monthly “Mind Gym” has proven very popular.
- Encourage students to teach each other and to share their ways of working.
- Model how we as teachers are learning – talk through our own experiences.
- Ask for student feedback on how we could improve the learning experiences. We have, this year, started pupil observations and feedback in certain subjects.
- Ensure there is room for flexibility in lesson plans.
- Encourage students to lead the learning.
- Have clear signs to resources such as pens, rulers and other equipment. (especially important in the senior part of the school where students are moving from room to room).
- Encourage students to identify the successes of others and to celebrate them.
- Encourage pupils to find out for themselves their own limitations by grading tasks set in an accessible way for them and allowing them the choice.
- Pupils from Year 4 upwards study PPE.
- Our post-exam programme develops life-skills still further for Year 8 boys before they leave us, studying first aid skills or setting up small businesses to return a profit for charity. From September 2018, all boys in Years 7 and 8 have followed a “Scholarship Path” to enable them to be challenged further.
- In addition to this, there are regular projects, both as part of the core curriculum and as whole school initiatives for Green Week etc. throughout the year. ie. The Solefield Take-Away Menu over the summer holidays offered a variety of activities to pupils and staff.

We provide pupils in EYFS, KS1 and KS2 with access to Discovery Espresso at home, Achieve 300’s Teen Biz and Kid Biz and BOFA to enable them to work independently. These are extremely popular with parents and pupils.

All pupils in Year 8 give a presentation to the whole school in assembly, thus developing research and presentation skills. Our Head and Deputy Head Boys lead the whole school assembly twice a week. Our Chair of School Council announces the Kindness Awards every week.

School Council and Eco Team play a vital part of our school life and instigates many pupil-led reforms and initiatives.

Prefects have particular roles within the school; for example, we have prefects responsible for charities, singing, sport, the playground, library, initiative, wellbeing and ICT. These responsibilities are taken seriously. Volunteer Year 8 pupils act as peer mediators on a daily basis in the playground.

Promoting Independent Learning is an evolving process and we need to keep reviewing it regularly to ensure that we prepare our pupils for life after Solefield.

Helen McClure  
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