CURRICULUM POLICY

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO MILLFIELD PREP SCHOOL AND MILLFIELD PRE-PREP SCHOOL (INCLUDING EYFS)

The Academic Mission of Millfield Prep School directly reflects the school’s general strategic goals. As such, it seeks to:

1.1 Educate the whole child by providing opportunities in breadth and depth for the concurrent development of all dimensions of school life – academic, cultural, aesthetic and creative, spiritual, moral, physical and practical;
1.2 Discover and develop the unique talents, abilities and potential of each individual, in accordance with the philosophy and vision of our founder;
1.3 Adopt a forward-looking and innovative approach which reflects our awareness of current and future trends without sacrificing traditional strengths;
1.4 Provide high-calibre staff who are themselves open to learning and who are given extensive training opportunities for continuing professional development;
1.5 Provide quality learning environments with a happy, healthy, vibrant atmosphere, and within them a sense of purposeful learning and a climate of open, friendly communication, mutual trust, respect and understanding;
1.6 Create a culture of achievement and positive reinforcement at all levels of ability through appropriately differentiated expectations.
1.7 Provide a curriculum that is accessible to all pupils in the school, meeting individual needs and adjusting their academic programme where necessary to cater for AEN/EAL requirements or to accommodate additional sporting or musical tuition.
1.8 Prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.

2. It also seeks to promote the following purposes of learning:
2.1 To help pupils develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to task;
2.2 To help pupils acquire understanding, knowledge and skills relevant to adult life and employment in a fast-changing world;
2.3 To help pupils to use language and number effectively;
2.4 To help pupils to develop personal moral values, respect for religious values, and tolerance of other races, religions, sexual orientation and respect individual ways of life and British values;
2.5 To help pupils to understand the world in which they live, and the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations;
2.6 To help pupils to appreciate human achievements and aspirations.

3. Arising from these various aims, our curriculum aims to achieve the following, more specific objectives:
3.1 It must engage, motivate, challenge and sustain the interest of every pupil, whatever their strengths and weaknesses, and build their confidence and self-esteem;
3.2 It must endeavour to nurture the personal aspirations and ignite the innate curiosity of every pupil;

3.3 While supporting a culture of achievement and positive reinforcement, it must nevertheless evaluate and address the weaknesses of every pupil so as to ensure demonstrable progress;

3.4 It must prepare pupils thoroughly for success in internal examinations and in Scholarship, Continuous Curriculum Examinations (CCE), Adapted Continuous Curriculum Examinations (ACCE) both in conjunction with the senior school, Common Entrance (where appropriate) and public examinations, such as LAMDA, Associated Board and Guildhall Music examinations;

3.5 It must provide at least the knowledge and skills laid down in the statutory National Curriculum programmes of study which form the basis of International Primary Curriculum (IPC) and the CCE/ACCE syllabuses;

3.6 It must provide sufficient breadth and depth of educational experiences through a broad and balanced curriculum where all pupils have the opportunity to learn, make progress and achieve the highest standards of attainment in line with their ability with an awareness of current and future trends to establish a firm basis for future educational and career opportunities and choices; health, financial/economic.

3.7 It must promote the personal, moral and spiritual values and social skills necessary for a happy, healthy, fulfilled life and for responsible, caring citizenship.

4. Supporting the above objectives are the following key elements of knowledge and skills, which the curriculum aims to ensure that all pupils possess on leaving the school at age 13:

4.1 An investigative spirit, with the ability to think independently and work creatively towards the solution of problems;

4.2 The ability to apply existing knowledge, making inferences and drawing conclusions;

4.3 The ability to work co-operatively with others through rational and orderly discussion and respect for diversity of opinion;

4.4 The ability to communicate effectively in English, both orally and in writing;

4.5 Familiarity with the organisation and classification system of a library, and the ability to use different types of books for different purposes, including research.

4.6 A sound grasp of number not dependent on the use of calculators;

4.7 Competence in the use of modern information and communications technology, including mobile technologies and multimedia, e-mail and the internet (including safety use), while understanding its limitations;

4.8 The capability and confidence to design, make and evaluate technological products, including food technology and systems;

4.9 Personal fitness and an understanding of factors affecting personal health, including nutrition, alcohol, smoking and drugs;

4.10 A thorough grounding in the Humanities, including a solid knowledge base in History, Geography and Religious Studies as a foundation for interpretative skills and a deeper understanding of themes;

4.11 A sound theoretical and practical grasp of the natural sciences and an understanding of the scientific method;

4.12 The ability to observe and appreciate the natural world and care for the environment;

4.13 An informed appreciation of the Arts, including aspects of the cultural heritage of Britain and its values, Europe and the world;

4.14 Access to a wide range of opportunities to explore and fulfil physical and aesthetic, and creative education with particular reference to sporting, artistic and musical abilities including the performing arts;
4.15 Communicative competence in at least one foreign language, a sound grasp of its grammatical principles, and an understanding and appreciation of its culture (not applicable to some pupils undergoing the full Extra English programme in the LDC);

4.16 An ability to apply moral principles to personal and social issues, and an appreciation of the responsibilities of citizenship, encouraging respect for other people (paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (a) – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

5 In order to meet these needs the curriculum is planned and monitored in the following ways:

5.1 Curricular planning and development takes various forms: Heads of Department (HoD) plan with their department and alterations to the curriculum are made in consultation with the Academic Co-ordinator, Deputy Head and Headmistress, on-going review and discussion at weekly departmental meetings and through the teaching and learning committee (TLC) and full HoDs meetings. Recommendations for change are forwarded to the Headmistress directly and via department development plans.

5.2 Curricular planning includes liaison with Millfield Senior School to ensure the continuity of the curriculum experience and good transition between the different schools. Each academic department has a nominated subject liaison coordinator and MPS/Senior School meetings take place termly.

5.3 HoDs monitor the way their subject is taught in their departments and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used and teaching and learning resources are managed effectively taking into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils including those pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC).

5.4 HoDs choose the most suitable specifications for delivery of the curriculum and are responsible for ensuring that schemes of work are produced which indicate the topics that are to be taught each term and to which pupils. Schemes of work are reviewed on an annual basis. They must ensure they do 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.

5.5 Staffing needs are reviewed annually by the Headmistress when the efficiency of the current year is considered and projections made for the following year. The Deputy Head produces the Timetable to meet these needs.

Curriculum

The Year Structure
Millfield Prep School is an independent Prep school for boys and girls aged 2 to 13, that is Pre-School to Year Eight inclusive. It is one of the two Millfield Schools, which also includes Millfield Senior School, Years 9-Upper 6th Form.
Differentiation

‘Differentiation’ is the collective term used to describe the school’s methods of meeting the varied educational needs of its pupils. It includes not only streaming and setting but also in-class differentiation methods, e.g. graded worksheets, extension work for able pupils etc.

Allocation of pupils on entry into groups is determined by a number of factors including their ability in English, which is assessed by the use of standardized tests (see the section on Standardized Tests inc. GL Complete Digital Solution for details). Entrance assessments results are also referred to, as are reports from previous schools and reports by educational psychologists. An important factor in deciding the appropriate group for a pupil is the extent to which Extra English help will be needed, and this is carefully assessed by the Head of the Learning Development Centre (LDC) through tests and interviews. (More detailed information on the role of the LDC in the school’s admission process may be found in the LDC Handbook.) Another factor taken into account is the foreign language ability of the pupil.

The placement of a pupil is reviewed in the early part of the autumn term and thereafter at intervals to ensure that the group or set is the right one for the children. The review process may include consideration of how well the pupil is integrated socially in his or her group, as well as strictly academic criteria.

According to their ability, pupils are placed in sets for Maths in all years and for languages in Years 6, 7 and 8. Some groups take two languages from a choice of French, Spanish and Latin; other groups take one language from the same range of choices. Pupils in those groups timetabled for intensive Extra English participate in the ‘Languages for All’ (LFA) scheme where the whole group may follow a reduced foreign language timetable to enable them to attend two lessons of Extra English a week, or individual pupils may be extracted from foreign language lessons.

In the academic year (2018-19) there are nine Year 8 groups, seven Year 7 groups, five Year 6 groups, three Year 5 groups, two Year 4 groups, and two Year 3 groups. The number of groups in a Year is reviewed annually. The maintenance of small classes is a major consideration in determining the number of groups.
Small Classes
Millfield Prep School is committed to small classes for all its pupils. The recommended group size is no greater than 17 pupils. Groups for pupils with learning difficulties who need intensive LDC provision may be significantly smaller, and such groups are divided into even smaller units for Extra English lessons.

While it is obvious that good teaching is the essential factor in promoting effective learning, it is also self-evident that small classes create learning conditions which maximize learning opportunities for all pupils.

For example, more precise differentiation is clearly facilitated by small classes, and this fosters systematic progression because pupils can focus on clearly defined common tasks; the need for complex classroom management, a feature of large classes, is avoided, freeing time for teaching which engages, challenges and motivates all pupils, instead of routine matters; pupils receive more individual attention in various ways – the teacher is able to involve all pupils in oral work using a variety of questioning modes, thus encouraging self-expression, building self-confidence, adaptability, creativity, and resilience, promoting thinking skills which go beyond mere recall of information; there are increased opportunities for collaboration, reflection and elaboration of ideas in the context of orderly discussion work in which all pupils can participate and through which pupils learn to listen to each other and respect alternative points of view; the teacher can devote more time to formative assessment through observation of work in progress and to detailed marking of books which provides essential evaluative feedback to all pupils.

Other advantages of small classes, apart from the academic ones outlined above, include provision or highly sensitive and individualized pastoral care and close communication with parents, thus promoting one of the central aims of the school – the achievement of individual potential within a caring environment.

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