



## CURRICULUM POLICY STATEMENT

### **DEVELOPING THE CURRICULUM AND THE WHOLE PERSON: a statement of purpose and intent**

As we seek to live out our mission as an avowedly Catholic and academic school we are reminded of the words of our patron, St. Bede:

*'I pray you good Jesus that as you have given me the grace to drink with joy the word that gives knowledge of you, so in your goodness you will grant me to come at length to yourself, the source of all wisdom, to stand before your face forever'*

Just as Bede dedicated his life to the pursuit of learning and to search for knowledge of the Lord, so, too, in our small way, his prayer sums up our aims, our hopes, our faith. We hope our pupils will emerge as theologically literate adults, able to articulate their faith in an increasingly secular world. The kingdom of God cannot be built except through a self-sacrificing commitment to Gospel values in the lives of those whom we seek to educate.

**We will seek to promote the highest standards of academic achievement within a distinctively Catholic educational framework. Every student should be empowered by our curriculum which will be constantly reviewed so that no student feels excluded and the talents of each student, as an individual are recognised and brought to fulfilment.**

#### ***Within the academic life of the school, our aims for all pupils are:***

- A sense of morality, that all actions have consequences and that to 'love your neighbour as you should be the basis of our behaviour to each other. All subjects contribute to a student's understanding of moral and ethical issues.
- A Theological understanding of our place in the world, and as Catholics, of our being part of the Universal Church
- Fluency in, and accurate use and understanding of English in all manner of communication
- Skill in numeracy, problem-solving and mathematical methods
- Knowledge of concepts and issues in Science and Technology. Skill in scientific investigation and application of science to everyday experience. Clear understanding of the ethical implications of scientific discoveries.
- Proficiency in at least one modern language, with the opportunity to attain knowledge and understanding of at least one other Classical or Modern Language
- Fostering an appreciation and development of enjoyment of Art, Music and Drama together with skills and abilities in these areas
- Proficiency in the use of ICT and an awareness of its applications
- Knowledge of concepts, issues and applications in History and Geography. A contextual understanding of the world in which we live, the need for political awareness, sound judgements and informed views on the contemporary world
- Promotion of health, well being and physical fitness. A respect for ourselves and others in which Spiritual well being is central to our holistic well being
- Understanding of the need to respect religious and moral values. To affirm individuality and inclusivity within a culturally diverse environment
- The development of independent thought and study and the active encouragement of curiosity and a spirit of enquiry and adventure. To encourage reasoned argument and debate
- The provision of a rich co-curricular environment in which the aims above can be fulfilled

***This is a statement of purpose and intent. The gospel values we seek to inculcate in our pupils cannot be circumscribed. The development of the whole person is a dynamic, constantly evolving challenge that we all contribute to whatever our role: ultimately we do so as fellow Christians in the service of all.***



## CURRICULUM OUTLINE, AIMS AND RATIONALE

### DEPARTMENTS

The College is organized in the following Departments:

Biology	Geology
Business Studies/Economics	History
Careers	Information Communication Technology
Chemistry	Mathematics
Classics	Modern Languages
Combined Science	Music
Design Technology	Personal Social & Moral Education
Drama	Politics
English	Physical Education & Games
Fine Art & Photography	Physics
Geography	Religious Education

### AIMS/RATIONALE

At the centre of the curriculum at St Bede's is our commitment to the Catholic faith and a desire to produce well educated, articulate, theologically literate and compassionate young people who will proclaim the word and values of Christ's Gospel to the world in whatever sphere of life they operate.

It follows that as a community of believers, the individual is valued and his or her abilities and skills are cherished, nurtured and developed in a totally supportive environment. The curriculum must therefore be stimulating, inspiring and offer the widest choice to develop the varying abilities and talents of each student in the College.

Our shared values and common religious heritage mean that the pastoral is inextricably linked with the academic and we aim to develop each student as an individual, stressing personal achievement and the life enhancing force of learning. Our social mission and socio-economic diversity may clearly be linked to our curricular aims, in that we still see education as an empowering force that will make our students valued citizens and defenders of the Christian cause in Britain and the world.

- St Bede's follows the National Curriculum in its broadest form, but aims to enhance this further offering variety and breadth for as long as is possible before the inevitable specialisation of GCSE.
- In the Lower School English, French, Maths, Religion and Science form the curriculum core around which a range of other subjects is structured.
- We offer formal training in the Upper Third in the rudiments of Information and Communications Technology, giving the basic knowledge essential to progress in a technologically advanced society.
- A generous allowance for Physical Education is made in all year groups.
- Our two week timetable allows us to offer a very diverse and extensive curriculum. There are 70 lessons in the timetable with the following distribution at the various Key Stages:

## KEY STAGE 3

UPPER 3				LOWER 4			
English	8	Geography	5	English	8	Geography	5
Maths	8	History	5	Maths	8	History	5
Religion	5	Art	4	Religion	5	Art	4
Science	8	Music	3	Science	9	Music	3
Latin	5	Technology	4	Latin	5	Technology	4
French	3	Games & PE	3	Spanish	4	Games	2
Spanish	3	Form Time	2	French	4	PE	1
IT	2	Drama	1	Form Time	2	Drama	1

Our Upper 3 and Lower 4 curriculum offers a General Science course which allows all students to acquaint themselves with scientific concepts and investigation before moving to study individual sciences in the Upper Fourth.

Design Technology is equally offered to all.

UPPER 4			
English	7	Geography	5
Maths*	7	History	5
Religion	5	Games & PE	3
Physics	5	Option 1	5
Chemistry	5	Option 2	5
Biology	5	Option 3	5
Form Time	1	Option 4	5

Students must make:

- 1 choice of a Modern Foreign Language\*\* from French, German and Spanish
- 2 choice of a Modern or Classical Language from French, German, Spanish, Classical Greek or Latin
- 3 then a further 2 choices from the following:

Latin	Art	ICT or Design Technology
Greek	Music	Economics or Business Studies
German	Spanish	

These are 1 year courses. But a student cannot choose one of the above options for GCSE (except Art and Music) unless he or she opts for them in the U4.

In the Upper 4 we offer separate sciences to prepare students for the specific demands of GCSE science options.

Our Personal, Social and Moral Education programme is derived from our Catholicity and recognises how the emotional and spiritual development of our students cannot be separated from their academic development. This is taught in Form Time.

\* Mathematics is set in the Upper Fourth based on prior performance.

\*\* Latin or Greek may be substituted in some instances.

## KEY STAGE 4

LOWER & UPPER 5			
English	11*	Games L5	2
Maths	11	Games U5	3
French	7	4 Options**	4x7
Religion	7	Form Time	1

\*English has 10 periods in Upper Fifth to provide for form time in all years (from September 2009)

All students study 9 subjects for GCSE. (Please see exceptions below).

Mathematics is set from the L5 and those students in the top Mathematics sets (approx 60 students in total) will study 10 subjects for GCSE. Set 1 will study IGCSE Mathematics instead of GCSE Mathematics. The bottom sets take unitised Mathematics.

5 subjects comprise the core curriculum: English, English Literature, Mathematics, RE and French. Students in the top Mathematics sets also take GCSE Statistics in the same time allocated to their Mathematics lessons.

4 other subjects are then chosen from the following list: Art, Biology, Chemistry, Double Science, Geography, History, Music, Physics and the 4 Upper 4 Options chosen by the student.

The following restrictions apply:

- 1 One science must be studied as a minimum
- 2 Double Science includes elements of Biology, Chemistry and Physics and counts as 2 choices. Students receive 2 GCSEs for successful completion of this option
- 3 Students may choose to continue with any 1, 2, 3 or ALL of their U4 Option subjects or alternatively drop 1, 2, 3 or ALL of them.
- 4 It is not possible to choose another U4 option subject at this stage with the exception of Music and Art which may be taken up for GCSE.

The current curriculum is a result of the most extensive review, completed and implemented between 2003 and 2005. Further amendments were made in 2009 and 2010. It fully reflects national developments whilst remaining far more diverse and considerate of individual needs and interests than is usually the case: in short, academic, creative and Catholic in its scope.

**THE SIXTH FORM CURRICULUM EXPLAINED**

Our Sixth Form curriculum offers a unique variety of subjects to study with 29 different AS and A2 options being offered and with almost every combination of subjects being possible due to our very flexible timetabling. We continue to believe that a Sixth Form education encompasses not just the academic but must integrate physical, moral and spiritual development too. The Sixth Form methods of study which we inculcate offer an appropriate introduction to university teaching whilst retaining the high degree of support, practical assistance and pastoral care that is essential for the well being of our students.

**THE LOWER SIXTH**

**Lower Sixth** students usually study 4 subjects at AS level, allowing a broad base of academic interests.

A General Religion class supports their spiritual growth as young Catholic adults.

A broad-based Complementary Studies programme allows students to select a range of non-examined courses to enhance their general knowledge. Staff offer courses in areas of particular interest or expertise.

Wednesday games afternoon allows for a wide range of leisure and physical fitness activities to be pursued.

Each student is placed under the care of a highly experienced tutor who works within a small tutor group to provide a very high level of individual pastoral and academic care and support. That member of staff will very clearly understand the pressures and pitfalls likely to beset the student as they develop their sixth form career and acts as a personal mentor for two years. Direct contact time in class, is balanced by study periods when a student may pursue independent research and encounter a different style of more self directed working. Students are allocated to the Library or Sixth Form Study Area where a member of staff is present to provide support if required.

**THE UPPER SIXTH**

The **Upper Sixth** usually finds a student choosing to specialise in 3 courses to A2 standard to fulfil university entrance requirements.

General Religion and Games continue to form key elements of a balanced programme.

Life Skills replaces Complementary Studies in the Upper Sixth. As the name suggests, students will be offered a number of opportunities to prepare themselves for university or life beyond St Bede's such as basic cookery, health and well-being, money management and home care.

We recognise that any student may feel the need for Study skills as examinations approach.

Specialist Oxbridge and Extension teaching, available until the interview season, is gradually replaced by specialist Study Skills classes and additional private study if required.

To provide challenge for our most able students, the Extended Project Qualification has been offered since September 2009: initially for our Upper Sixth and from 2010 we hope to offer this in addition to Lower Sixth students.

The role of the tutor remains paramount in assisting the student to manage their programme of work and to offer support and guidance in university choices and applications. Time will be offered to facilitate the completion of the electronic university application form.

There continue to be periods of individual study.

A few students may wish to study 4 or even 5 A Levels, after suitable advice has been sought as to the benefits of this course of action. Such students will find their timetable is lightened by exemption from attendance at Complementary Studies lessons. Other students may take a further AS, and again we hope to offer the flexibility of approach to allow this to be part of a realistic programme of study.

Our Sixth Form curriculum has been proven to allow students to deliver their full academic potential. Of equal importance to us as a Catholic community however, is that our Sixth Form students enter the world beyond St Bede's as confident, socially compassionate and caring men and women who understand how they can contribute to furthering the Christian case in Britain.

All subjects in the L6 are taught on 12 periods a fortnight in groups of not more than 15 students. Many groups are substantially smaller than this. For the U6 group sizes usually reduce and subjects are taught for 14 periods per fortnight.

### SIXTH FORM

LOWER SIXTH	
4 AS Levels	4x 12
General Religion	3
Complementary Studies	2
Tutor Period	2
Games	3

UPPER SIXTH	
3 or 4 A2 (A levels)	4 x 14
General Religion	3
Life Skills	2
Tutor Period	2
Games	3

#### STUDENTS MAY CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING:

Ancient History	English Literature	Latin
Biology	Fine Art	Maths (i)
Business Studies	French	Music
Chemistry	Geography	Politics
Design & Technology	Geology	Physics
(iii)	German	Spanish
Economics	Greek	Theatre Studies
English Language	History	Theology
	ICT	

- (i) Courses include Maths with Statistics, Maths with Mechanics, Further Maths. Mathematically gifted students may study Further Maths in a reduced period allocation allowing them to pursue other academic interests in addition.
- (ii) courses include Product Design and Graphics.

PSME continues through General Religion and Tutor periods which are also intended to promote a greater awareness of the faith.

At the beginning of Sixth Form courses, strategies are employed to bridge the gap after GCSE to accommodate the more rigorous demands of A level and to encourage a gradual shift of responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student. There is the possibility for all students to take a combination of arts and science subjects to AS and A2 level.

A structured Complementary Studies course is followed by all to increase breadth in the Sixth Form curriculum. In the Upper Sixth, this is replaced by a range of Life Skills Options

There is constant review and frequent revision of courses by departments with regard to schemes of work and the appropriateness of examination board and syllabuses.

The variety and richness of the curriculum is evaluated by individual success at GCSE and by the fact that almost 100% of pupils go into our Sixth Form and subsequently gain places in Higher Education. We are confident in our aim to develop highly educated and articulate young men and women who are strong in their faith and able to take their place in society as responsible citizens.

