READING BLUE COAT

Curriculum Policy

This document should be read in conjunction with the following complementary documents:

- Assessment, Marking and Reporting Policy
- EAL Policy
- Learning Support Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

Aims

At Reading Blue Coat, we believe it is important that all our students have the opportunity to experience a broad and balanced curriculum that is enjoyable, challenging and an effective preparation for further study. Our vision is that our students should grow up to be independent learners, who are able to explore their thinking within a curriculum which is relevant, engaging and scholarly.

Students study a wide range of academic subjects prior to them embarking fully on GCSE study in Year 10. They develop and perfect key intellectual skills in a broad cultural and historical context, so that they can make sense of their learning as a coherent whole. While we want students to know things, we also encourage them to weigh the evidence and to be critical of what they hear, see and read. We take account of the ability of every student and ensure that each is challenged and their talents fostered.

When students leave Reading Blue Coat, we want them of to have the skills for university and the work-place; but also we want them to be knowledgeable and informed young people who have the skills to sustain a life-long love of learning.

Written Policies and Plans

Full details of the academic programmes of study are included in the individual schemes of work produced by Heads of Department and coordinated and stored by the Deputy Head (Academic).

Through supervision of the department handbooks, and regular meetings with Heads of Department, including the annual target reviews, the Deputy Head (Academic) ensures that these do not undermine British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The needs of any student with an Education, Health and Care plan are coordinated by the Director of Learning Support, who ensures that statutory requirements and individual needs are met. The policy is laid out in full in a separate document.

The Curriculum in Outline

All students of compulsory school age attend school full-time, and are given experience in linguistic,

mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative education. By offering a broad range of subjects and having a policy of students taking at least ten subjects to GCSE, the breadth of the educational experience is maintained for as long as possible. To foster linguistic skills, all students take GCSEs in English Language and English Literature and, with a few exceptions, at least one foreign language. All students take GCSEs in Mathematics and Science (Triple Award Science and Double Award Science are offered).

Religious Studies is compulsory to the end of Year 10. History, Geography, and Computer Science are all compulsory up to the end of Year 9; a range of creative subjects in Year 8 students take a number of creative subjects from Art, Dance, Design & Technology, Drama and Music and the vast majority continue with them in Year 9 and beyond. All the subjects mentioned are available at GCSE, with Geology, and Physical Education also offered. Religious Studies is taken as a compulsory GCSE at the end of Year 10. Physical Education is taught in Years 7-9 and all students have weekly Sport lessons.

Students are supervised in all classes in Years 7 to 11. There are no study periods in these year groups. When a student has a 'free' block of time (e.g., a student may arrive in Year 9 having studied no French, German or Spanish), the student goes to the Library and is supervised and registered there. Students unable to participate in Sport are supervised by a member of staff in the Library or another published venue.

Details of the Curriculum by Year

Year 7 sets down a broad and general foundation in English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, a carousel of French, German and Spanish, History, Geography, Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE), Latin, Art, Music, Drama & Dance, Design & Technology, Computer Science and Physical Education (PE). The teaching of Library skills supports these. Wellbeing (PSHE) and structured Assemblies, Sport (Rugby, Hockey, Football, Netball, Cricket and Athletics) and a range of other activities (Adventure Education, Aldworth Partnership, Public Speaking, etc.), complete the programme.

Year 8 is similar in structure to Year 7, except students choose one language from French, German and Spanish and five from Latin, Music, DT, Art, Drama, Dance and a second modern foreign language.

Year 9 retains the broad approach, but with the inclusion of Geology. Two or three subjects from Latin, Art, Music, Design, Drama, Dance and a second Foreign Language are also chosen at this stage. The policy in Sport from Year 9 upwards is to develop widening choice to enable students to explore and develop individual as well as team sports.

Years 10 and 11 retain the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. A Foreign Language and PRE are also compulsory. All other subjects fall into three option blocks. In these blocks, the second language, the Humanities, the Arts and the Technologies are distributed to reflect maximum choice. This choice is controlled by advice to ensure reasonable balance and the avoidance of premature specialisation. All courses lead to a full GCSE or IGCSE. This programme is supported by Wellbeing (PSHE), Activities, Sport and Assemblies.

The Sixth Form consists of up to four A level subjects, one chosen from each of four blocks, which are devised according to student choice. New subjects such as Business, Economics, Politics and Psychology are added to those studied at GCSE. Students have the option to drop one of their four A Level choices at the Autumn Half Term and again at the end of the Summer Term in Year 12. Those students who drop to three A levels are offered the opportunity to do an EPQ.

All Sixth Form students also take courses in Futures and compulsory sessions in Activities and Sport, with a wide choice of options available. A small amount of time for private study is available in Year 12 with a greater emphasis on independent learning occurring in Year 13.

Speaking, Listening, Literacy and Numeracy Skills

Students acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. Attention is paid to these skills across the curriculum and not just in Mathematics, Science, English, MFL and Latin. Students are assessed in literacy and numeracy by appropriate work set in each year and by formal examinations and tests. Student participation in class at every level ensures that high standards of speaking and listening are maintained, the latter also tested by written work and formal examinations. Questioning and collaborative learning are at the heart of our academic aims and methods, as described in the *Teaching and Learning Policy*.

Lessons are conducted in English; where English is not the students' first language, we are satisfied at the point of entry that the student is able to cope with the teaching provided. A more detailed explanation of the School's approach is provided in our *EAL Policy*.

Wellbeing (PSHE)

Wellbeing (PSHE) is delivered in the following ways:

- In Years 7 to 11, there is a formal programme delivered in a single 35-minute lesson each week by a single teacher over the course of a year. The programme of study for each year group is devised and revised by the Director of Wellbeing & Futures.
- Students in the Sixth Form have a period per week for Futures where they cover PSHE topics and are prepared for life beyond Reading Blue Coat in small groups, The programme of study for each year group is devised and revised by the Director of Wellbeing & Futures.
- Particular Wellbeing (PSHE) topics form part of the assembly programme each term; those leading the weekly spiritual assemblies also frequently deal with relevant topics.
- Teachers are encouraged to deal with such issues in academic subjects as they arise and are highlighted in schemes of work (e.g., emotional responses discussed in the study of English Literature; social issues in Geography and Science, for example).
- Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (PRE), which is compulsory in Years 7 to 10, plays a crucial role in exploring Wellbeing (PSHE) topics.

Futures Guidance

The Deputy Head (Academic) gives advice on GCSE and A Level choices and produces brochures annually with the most up-to-date information on the courses available. This guidance is backed up by Heads of Year and Tutors in year-group assemblies and tutorial time. An evening is held in the Spring Term, to which students and parents are invited, to explain the workings of the options systems at Reading Blue Coat and the nature of the advice available. Students and parents then tour departments to initiate conversations about subjects and career choices. At the beginning of each round in the choices season, the Deputy Head (Academic) reminds teachers of the need to present details of their subject and its possible career paths in a professional way.

From Year 7 students are provided with access to independent and impartial futures guidance and advice in Wellbeing (PSHE) lessons. The aim is to enable students to gain sufficient information about courses, training, education and occupations beyond school so that they can make well-informed decisions about their subject choices and career pathways.

In Year 12, each student has a weekly period of Futures throughout the year. The Futures course covers both personal and professional futures. It covers among other things, compiling a CV, before progressing to an understanding of the UCAS system and an appreciation of other employment and training possibilities. This advice is then reinforced by tutors and the Sixth Form team.

Annual Futures Fairs are held each year, when visiting companies, professionals and universities give advice to students and their parents on university courses and career possibilities.

Activities and the Co-Curricular Programme

Reading Blue Coat offers a broad programme of activities, which aid the students' personal, social, emotional and physical development and their communication and language skills.

In all year groups, there is a weekly double period of Activities timetabled. In Years 7 and 8, there is a carousel of activities, which includes Community Action, Enterprise and Public Speaking alongside the Adventure Education programme. In Year 9 students are asked to choose two out of three options. They have the opportunity to join the School's Combined Cadet Force (which has an Army, Navy and Air Force section), work towards an Adventure Education qualification or participate in a Service activity. Years 10 and above are involved in the Senior Activities programme, which falls under six strands: Adventure, Creative Arts, Service, Leadership and Social Action, Sport and Wellbeing and Super Curriculum. During Senior Activities there are over 30 different sessions on offer and pupils can choose to participate in one activity for the entire year or experience three different activities (one per term).

All year groups have a weekly Sports afternoon. A rich variety of sports are on offer; those naturally interested in sport are encouraged to foster and develop their talents to a high level. On the other hand, it is recognised that not all are natural sportspeople and that indeed some students have an aversion to sport. We are committed to encouraging physical fitness and provide a full range of activities so that each student at every level can find something to their liking and so develop physical fitness and the ability to be part of a team and to work together.

Teaching British Values

The breadth of the curriculum provides students with the experience of many issues which they will face in life in British society. The Wellbeing (PSHE) programme at all levels explicitly encourages students to think about human relationships in an age-appropriate way; while such issues are regularly discussed in Religious Studies lessons and through the medium of English Literature.

The need actively to promote British values is met in various elements of the curriculum, most significantly in History and Politics, and in Wellbeing (PSHE) lessons and Whole School and Section or year group assemblies.

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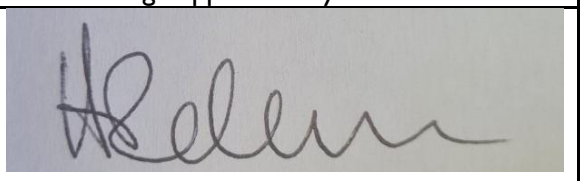
Agreed by:	 Helen Roberts (Chair, Education Committee) *on behalf of the Full Governing Board*
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