Blundell's

FOUNDED 1604

CURRICULUM POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Underpinning the curriculum is the school's policy of 'roots and wings', developed through emphasis on the following areas and which is also outlined in the school's 2025 Vision:

DYNAMIC LEARNERS

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

We help pupils to take ownership of their learning, balancing expert teacher support and collaboration with others, with resourcefulness and resilience. In this we develop both interdependence and independence in our pupils, characteristics that will enable them to thrive in the classroom, on the stage, on the sports pitches and in their Houses.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

UNDERSTANDING WHO I AM

I believe that my character is derived from being true to myself and my values. Our ethos is based on an acceptance of ourselves and others, and the celebration of diversity and difference within our community. We are authentic, with the emotional intelligence and confidence to embrace the world beyond Blundell's.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

We find purpose and meaning in engaging with the world around us, in line with our Christian values, collaborating with our community, near and far, in a profoundly positive way. With passion and optimism, we can change the world for the better.

DISCOVERY

THE JOY OF ADVENTURE

We are brave and courageous in embracing challenge and adventure. Our collective and individual curiosity fuels innovation and an openness to new ideas. From Nursery to Sixth Form, in lessons and at play, we take measured/appropriate risks in pursuit of what is possible.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

ESTABLISHED AND ENTERPRISING

Underpinning our ambition is a commitment to strong governance and a secure financial future for our school. The development of our facilities and our people ensure excellence in all that we do, and enables us to achieve our vision. A global outlook rooted in the South-West of England.

ORGANISATION OF THE CURRICULUM

- Blundell's provides a broad curriculum experience which allows pupils the opportunity to have progressively more challenging linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, aesthetic, creative, physical, human and social educational experiences, and to build positively on their learning in those areas within a supportive environment.

- We offer a varied and balanced academic curriculum, with 21 subjects available at GCSE and 31 subjects in the Sixth form, whilst offering additional opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, drawing on the expertise and support of a dedicated, enthusiastic and well-qualified staff.

- Every department supports the development of pupils 'understanding of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect (British values). This can be seen through direct links in individual lessons for example on the causes of the Civil War in Year 8 History, the role of women in *Of Mice and Men* in Year 10 English or the 'moral choices 'components in the Key Stage 3 and 4 Drama lessons. Moreover, throughout the curriculum, we ensure pupils are given a balanced viewpoint and the opportunity to explore a range of views – and, through classroom discussion and an open and tolerant atmosphere, pupils are taught to respect the views of others.

- We have a strong commitment to optimising teacher to pupil ratios, and catering afresh for the academic preferences of pupils each year with timetable block flexibility at GCSE and A level whenever possible. Class sizes are therefore only occasionally ever greater than 20, and may be less than 5 for some A level subjects. More typically, classes are between 12-18 from Year 7 to Year 11, and then 6-12 in the Sixth Form, although these will vary each year.

- Our focus is to enable senior pupils to access the academic subjects which most closely match their interests, aptitudes and aspirations; this helps them to develop their potential with enthusiasm and confidence. Academic departments work closely with tutors to ensure each pupil has the right programme for them and the Year 11 tutors, working with the PSHE department, take the lead in using the Morrisby feedback provided by the Careers department to help the pupil make the best possible decisions.

- Regular Parents' meetings for each year group and twice a year in Year 7,9, 12 and 13, allow parents the chance to meet pupils' teachers and tutors in person. We offer Saturday Academic Parents' Forums, which are led by the Deputy Head, Academic, covering detailed information relevant to that year group and looking ahead to the next stage. Each year group has 2 Forums a year. The Head of the Year, the Head of PSHE, and the Head of Careers will also participate in these forums where relevant, and communication is encouraged at any other time as required. Parents receive regular feedback on academic progress and personal development via tutor reports, full reports and tutor letters.

ENRICHMENT

- We are committed to ensuring that opportunities to learn outside the classroom are available every year to each pupil as they progress through the School. We have a Field Day each term when all pupils are invited to participate in trips, outings, visits and workshops. We are fortunate to be in a geographical location which allows easy access to some outstanding facilities such as the Eden Project, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Haldon Forest, Broomhill Sculpture Park, Woolacombe Bay, Dunster Castle, Cheddar Gorge, Longleat, Escot Park, @Bristol, Paignton Zoo and the Blackdown Hills amongst others.

- An imaginative programme of cross curricular events are devised for Years 7 – 9. In Years 7 and 8 these form an integral part of the Roots and Wings program every Friday afternoon where external speakers

and internal lectures challenge and stimulate pupils. These have included lectures on cryptography, workshops from visiting artists and authors and engineering challenges. Every weekend during term, different groups of pupils will have outings arranged (in addition to a full sports fixtures programme) which have included coasteering, paintballing, quad biking, cinema visits, Ten Tors training and Duke of Edinburgh expedition practice. Participation in these is voluntary and we are delighted that so many pupils take up these opportunities, bringing a real sense of community to the school throughout the weekend as well as the working week. Opportunities for wider travel and adventure come through projects such as supporting the school Bhambayi, South Africa and the biennial World Challenge trips. All School House pupils take part in the "Islands Project" over 3 days in the summer term of Year 8 where they work as governments to ensure the survival and success of their own Island

- Year 9 have one "Character" lesson a week that rotates through a program including Wellbeing, Service and Character

- Years 9 and 10 are invited to join the Phoenix society aimed at "the intellectually curious". Structured around a talk and a visit, this has taken pupils to Hinckley Point, Jaguar Land Rover, Flybe, the Houses of Parliament, the Supreme Court, a magistrates 'court (in session) to name but a few.

- Year 10 and 11 have two "Elective" lessons a fortnight were they have compulsory modules through the year, on Employability, Study skills and Careers, and also optional courses to select, on Greek, CREST, Mandarin, Arts Award, Sports leadership, to name but a few on offer.

- Years 11-13 have regular time on a Friday after school when visiting speakers, whole year lectures as well as smaller interest groups run. These consist of a mix of compulsory and optional activities.

- The Activities programme offers a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' leadership and teamwork skills. These range from participation in the Enterprise programme (via the Economics Society or the Young Enterprise scheme), to contribution of the editorial team of the school magazines and publications as well as giving pupil opportunities for senior pupils to run Academic Societies. Through the School Council, pupils have the opportunity to comment on events such as Field Day and suggest improvements. There is an Blundell's Community Action Teams, run by senior pupils, put on events for pupils.

- We are involved with the local community in many different ways, ranging from volunteering (visits to residential care homes; work with primary age pupils) to support of charities through local fundraising events such as joint Art exhibitions and musical concerts; and hosting lectures (including the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Institute of Economic Affairs), dramatic productions and local clubs such as the Tiverton Astronomy Society, from which our parents, staff and pupils also benefit. We host local schools including Tiverton High School and Heathcoat Primary School to events such as author visits and take our responsibility within the community very seriously. Our Sports Leaders work with local primary schools to widen participation in sporting events.

- We seek to broaden pupil horizons through a varied programme of sport and activities which are provided after lessons, with many opportunities to develop physical, mental, aesthetic, creative and problem-solving skills. Choir, Chamber Choir, Big Band and Orchestra are some of the larger musical ensembles, whilst annual House Plays and school plays or musicals provide a range of opportunities to perform, design and direct. Over 200 pupils take instrumental music lessons. The house public speaking and debating competitions are fiercely contested. All major sports are coached, and a full fixtures programme allows for pupils with different levels of sporting ability to participate in matches. Blundellians have reached prominence at both County/Regional and National level in Rugby, Athletics, Cross Country, Hockey, Equestrian, Fives, Squash, and Target Rifle. The annual Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race is proud tradition, as is the historic inter-house Russell Cross-Country Cup and Open

Competition which is a highlight of the Spring Term. Many pupils volunteer for the Ten Tours Challenge and all our Year 9 pupils take part in the Williams Cup in the Autumn.

- The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) is compulsory for four terms (Year 9/10) but many pupils opt to continue their involvement in working towards NCO rank promotion and developing a wide range of leadership and personal skills through adventurous training.

- Ancient Greek is offered as an extra GCSE option for those pupils who are interested in expanding their knowledge of the Ancient World.

THE PSHE, CAREERS & 'FUTURES' PROGRAMME (see also Careers Policy)

- The PSHE programme has protected time each week and is taught by experienced staff. Depending on the topic being taught, boys and girls are either taught separately or together in Years 7-9 a, otherwise in co-educational groups in the older years. The emphasis here is on enabling pupils to make the right decisions for themselves. Topics include RSE, e-safety; bullying & cyber-bullying; children and the law; nutrition and healthy eating; self-esteem & assertiveness; time management; puberty & adolescence; divided families; peer pressure; sexual health; alcohol and drug use/abuse; discrimination; the work of the police; UK and European government; rights & responsibilities; political participation; human rights; personal budgeting; mass media; global issues (water wars, famine, organic & GM crops, population growth, women's rights, AIDS/HIV).

- The programme for PSHE in the Sixth Form includes presentations from visiting experts and agencies. These presentations are well received by pupils, particularly on topics such as sexual health, safe driving, drugs and alcohol. The talks are generally scheduled into study periods or Futures periods without affecting teaching time.

- The Head of Higher Education & Careers is Level 6 qualified in Career Guidance & Development and Careers Leadership. She is also a Fellow of the CIPD with 20 years' experience working in HR across multiple industries.

- All Sixth Form pupils follow a 'Futures' programme in their free 'block' (1 period per fortnight on an annual programme). This comprises an introduction to UCAS and Careers advice, advice on interviews, Oxbridge entry and preparation and related topics. Pupils not wishing to go on to University are also guided and supported; destinations have included the Armed Forces, Foundation courses and direct employment. Pupils work with the same Futures teacher throughout the year in small groups with full ICT access, which allows for a very personal level of support, additional to the guidance received from their Academic Tutor, advice from the Head of Careers and the resources of the Careers Department.

- The Lower Sixth programme begins with pupils' presentations and self-reflections on their work experience before moving into familiarising pupils with the UCAS process and website (University & College Admissions System) which most will use to apply for places at Higher Education Institutions. This is also the focus in the Autumn Term of the Upper Sixth, with the Spring term programme focusing on managing a budget whilst away from home. Many pupils return for advice as Old Blundellians (for example if they are making an application in a GAP year) and we are happy to provide time and expertise to support them.

- The focus of careers guidance in the younger years is on providing access to a range of activities which inspire young people. This takes place for example in lectures and assemblies when Year 12 pupils give presentations to Years 7-9 on their work experience. Pupils consider their own strengths and weaknesses from Year 8 in PSHE which begins to sharpen their ideas on the sorts of work which might best suit them. In Year 9, guidance is given both in PSHE, in year group assemblies and by the tutors regarding GCSE options and different careers that they may lead to. Strong links are built with

employers, many of them who are Old Blundellians. They come to the school to give 'Careers lunches' open to pupils in Years 9-13; recently we have welcomed speakers from John Lewis, the agricultural sector and the marketing sector.

- Year 11s also take the online adaptive Morrisby test and discuss their findings with their tutor and a report is written to parents. This leads into the Employability event, in which pupils have the opportunity to work in small groups with leaders in different careers. Work experience is completed by the Year 11 pupils after their GCSE exams.

SUPPORTING LEARNING (SEND/EAL)

- All our pupils have full access to the curriculum. Pupils with SEN or EAL are assessed as they enter the school so the right provision can be put in place for them. A small number of pupils who will struggle to access the full curriculum successfully may follow a reduced programme which is determined in consultation with their families, the EAL or Learning Support Department, Houseparents and the Deputy Head, Academic. Close monitoring of the progress of such pupils can allow for adjustment at any point during an academic year. Should any pupils have a statement, their needs are suitably accommodated.

- The Learning Support department is fully integrated within the curriculum. Links are made with the pupil's primary / prep school in Year 6 so the appropriate provision can be made. We are flexible in the design of an individual pupil's curriculum so pupils can gain the support they need – with the aim of the support being phased out as they get older and make the appropriate progress in their learning.

- 'Pupils on the Learning Support Register all have an individual education plan which is available to all staff via 'iSAMS'.

- The EAL department is similarly integrated and offers help for pupils whose first language is not English - usually around 10% - 12 % pupils. Lessons for EAL pupils are integrated into the curriculum and, in the lower years, are usually timetabled in place of a Modern Foreign Language. International Pupils in Year 11 may take IGCSE in English as a Second Language. International Pupils in the Sixth Form will take the IELTS qualification in addition to their A Level studies and may also take an A Level in their native language.

- There is close liaison between the Learning Support and the EAL department and the other departments. Advice is offered by both departments for teachers to ensure that pupils with special needs are fully supported within the curriculum as well is with additional support.

- Close liaison between these Departments and the Exams Officer also caters for access arrangements in some internal exams as well as public exam situations, such as pupils requiring extra time or use of a laptop or scribe. These pupils are in the minority but their needs are carefully identified. The Head of Learning Support is qualified in assessing the appropriate levels of need and where feasible, separate examination arrangements are put in place for extra time candidates in order to minimise the level of disruption experienced.

CURRICULUM IN YEARS 7, 8 AND 9

- There are four or five academic teaching groups in each of Years 7 & 8 to accommodate around 60 pupils, and five or six teaching groups in Year 9 (for 90-100 pupils) setted to some extent by ability in maths and English. We make minor adjustments each year if the academic profile and needs of the cohort dictate.

- Year 7 setted separately for Maths and otherwise in carefully organised sets to ensure pupils are placed alongside those with whom they will work well.

- Year 8 setted separately for Maths, otherwise in carefully organised sets to ensure pupils are placed alongside those with whom they will work well.

- Year 9 setted separately for English and Maths. The sets are arranged using data on the whole year performance together with new pupil entrance /scholarship exam data used for setting.

- The number of teaching periods allocated to each subject is given in the grid below.

- Each teaching period is 50 minutes long.

- Years 7 and 8 have lessons from Monday to Friday only. On Wednesday afternoons, pupils representing the school take part in sports matches, while those not involved attend an additional lesson, alternating between Maths and English. This may also include reading for pleasure or problem-solving activities. The afternoon then continues with games. From Year 9 onwards, pupils also attend Saturday morning school, which consists of three academic lessons.

- A termly programme of activities and games is arranged for the time between lessons and the end of school at 5.30pm.

- PSHE is taught in groups by a team of experienced PSHE teachers. There is also academic Tutor contact time built in to the week as additional pastoral support. Year 9 pupils have 1 period a week of Character Development/ Wellbeing. Year 10 and 11 pupils have one lesson a week of "Electives" where they have a mix of compulsory and optional lessons.

- In Years 7 & 8 almost all pupils study Modern Foreign Languages and Latin. The MfL provision is a French, alongside either German or Spanish.

- Pupils in Year 9 choose 3 subjects, which they take for 2.5 lessons a week. There are lots of options for them, and we are looking to introduce more in the future.

- Those pupils who receive EAL or Learning Support, may have these lessons in their option lines.

SUBJECT	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9
English (speaking, reading, listening and writing skills are all developed)	3.5 (+0.5 Wed P5)	3.5 (+0.5 Wed P5)	3
Mathematics	3.5 (+0.5 Wed P5)	3.5 (+0.5 Wed P5)	3
Year 7 Science	4		
Biology		1.5	2
Physics		1.5	2
Chemistry		1.5	2
Modern Languages; French/ German/ Spanish (speaking, reading, listening and writing skills are all developed)	2	2	
Latin	1	1	
Art (photography and digital as well as drawing, painting and 3D skills)	1	1	
Design & Technology (including Graphics and Computer Aided Design/Modelling)	1	1	
Drama	1	1	
Music	1	1	
Computing	1	1	
Geography	1.5	1.5	2
History	1.5	1.5	2
Physical Education (& timetabled Games)	1 (& 1)	1 (& 1)	1
Religious Studies	1	1	1
PSHE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education)	½ (but also Roots and Wings time used)	½ (but also Roots and Wings time used)	1

Computer Science Latin Ger French Drama DT Music Art Spanish LS Classics	-	-	2.5 (three only)
Spanish			
Character and Wellbeing			1
TOTAL number of periods per week	28	28	30

CURRICULUM FOR YEARS 10 & 11

In the Spring term of Year 9, pupils are asked what subjects they would like to choose at GCSE following guidance sessions with the Head of Careers within the PSHE programme from tutors as part of the tutorial programme, consultation with parents at the annual Parents' meeting, an Academic Forum led by the Deputy Head, Academic and Head of Careers, Parents and pupils are also directed to the Launchpad website (via the school's login) which is an excellent resource in helping to make decisions about future courses of study.

The teaching blocks are then constructed, based on these choices, to enable as many pupils as possible to study their chosen combination. For at least the past five years virtually every pupil has been able to study their chosen subjects.

All examined GCSE/iGCSE courses have 3 periods per week, except English (5 periods) and Maths (4 periods). Pupils are set by ability in these subjects and if appropriate can move sets during the two years without negatively impacting on any other lessons. Pupils in the top Maths set will take the Maths GSCE at the end of year 10, and then many take Further Maths GSCE in Year 11.

Pupils will generally sit 8 or 9 GCSEs from the 21 subjects available, comprised of the following:

English Language and English Literature or a combined English programme when it is deemed appropriate.
Mathematics
A minimum of two separate Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)

For the remaining five subjects many pupils will take a Modern Foreign Language and most pupils study at least one, and they are also encouraged to take at least one Humanity (History, Geography, RS) from the options below.

- Art
- Design & Technology (Resistant Materials OR Graphic Products courses available)

- Computer Science
- Music
- Drama
- French
- Spanish
- German
- Latin (Greek may also be taught and examined although lessons may be off timetable)
- Geography
- History
- Religious Studies
- Classical Civilisation

Pupils requiring EAL may take fewer GCSEs subjects and receive additional lessons in that subject block. Alternatively, they will follow a full GCSE programme and receive lessons in the General PE/RS non-examined block. In addition, pupils have a period of each of the following in Year 10 and 11:

- PSHE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education)
- Non-examined general Religious Studies/General PE rotation.

Pupils also have 1 period a week of "electives".

SIXTH FORM STUDIES

We recommend that pupils choose 3 or 4 subjects to study to Year 12 and then to continue with 3 of these to A2 level (although it is possible to do more than this). Subjects are timetabled for 6.5 periods each week in Year 12 and 7 periods a week in Year 13. but this may be reduced if there are only a small number of pupils wishing to study a particular subject. If numbers are exceptionally small, the option may not be viable but this is unusual.

Pupils choose their subjects in Spring of Year 11 and the timetable grid of blocks is devised to best suit the options selected and to allow the largest number of pupils the opportunity to study the combinations of subjects they have chosen.

Art (Fine)	German
Art (Photography)	Government & Politics
Biology	Greek (* teaching will be available if demand is sufficient)
Business Studies (Both A level and BTEC offered)	Latin
Chemistry	Mandarin (where pupils have experience of this subject prior to Sixth Form)
Classical Civilisations	Mathematics / Mathematical Studies/ Further Mathematics (guided choice)
Computing	Music/Music Technology
History	Physics

Design and Technology	PE (Both A level and BTEC offered)
Drama and Theatre Studies	Psychology
Economics	Religious Studies
English Literature	Spanish
French	English Language
Geography	

Reviewed by JAR2 2nd September 2026