



CURRICULUM POLICY

Aims

Downe House exists to provide girls with, and promote, an excellent holistic education. Since the School's establishment in 1907, its pupils have followed a curriculum which seeks to promote educational excellence within a relaxed but structured framework. The vision of the School's founder was the creation of a learning environment in which girls would flourish where mutual respect between staff and pupils was highly valued and pursued.

The development of each girl as an individual is achieved through the 'formal', 'informal' and 'hidden' curriculum.

Objectives

The Formal Curriculum

'Formally' the School strives to create a learning environment which enables the girl to strive for the highest academic results of which she is capable. In determining each girl's 'potential' the School bases its judgements first and foremost on knowledge of the girl as person, in addition to making careful use of available baseline data and value-added assessments. The girl is encouraged to aim high through a judicious mixture of appropriate challenge and support.

Ultimately, to enable girls to achieve a place on the Higher or Further Education course of their choice, as well as equip them for a future career, they are prepared for any appropriate national assessments and public examinations, given careers advice and guidance, and directed towards relevant work shadowing opportunities where appropriate.

Within all subject areas great emphasis is placed on developing the pupil's intellectual curiosity and skills of evaluation and critical analysis. Originality and independence of thought are greatly valued. A broad and balanced education for every student is provided as follows:

- a. language and communication;
- b. mathematical studies and applications;
- c. scientific studies and applications;
- d. social and environmental studies;
- e. information communication technology studies and applications;
- f. technological activities and applications;
- g. creative activities and applications;
- h. physical education; and
- i. religious and moral education.

The School also recognises and encourages cross-circular developments which reflects the interdisciplinary nature of many areas of study.

The Downe House publications: *Curriculum to 16+*, *GCSE Subjects and Options*, and *the Sixth Form Booklet* provide a detailed summary of the nature and scope of the School's courses.

The Informal Curriculum

'Informally' each girl is encouraged to develop her expertise and interest in a diverse range of extra-curricular activities for example in music, sport, drama and art. Opportunities are provided for pupils within the School grounds, the local area, nationally and overseas during term time and the holidays.

The Hidden Curriculum

In the delivery of its 'hidden' curriculum the School develops in its pupils the personal, social, spiritual and emotional awareness that ensures a holistic education. This involves fostering a diverse range of personal resources and characteristics unique to each individual, which will serve her well throughout life. Qualities likely to be of significance for most girls include:

- a. a positive, open minded attitude to life;
- b. belief in capability and awareness of potential tempered with humility;
- c. self-motivation and confidence;
- d. tolerance and empathy;
- e. awareness and understanding of responsibility;
- f. decision making skills;
- g. poise and skills of self-presentation.

The primary objective of the School's Curriculum Policy is to equip each girl with the prerequisite knowledge, understanding, values, learning and self-management skills which will enable her to excel as a mature adult within a rapidly changing world. To this end, the School is firmly committed to keeping at the forefront of best educational practice.

Implementation

Overall responsibility to the Headmistress for the delivery of the formal aims and objectives of the School Curriculum Policy is shared between the Assistant Headmaster and Deputy Headmistress. It is the duty of each Head of Department (Academic) or Subject Leader to lead and manage the delivery of these within the classroom. Details of all relevant Schemes of Work and relevant procedures are documents in *Departmental Handbooks*. It falls upon all members of staff within the School community, under the direction of the Headmistress and Leadership Team, to foster the skills, values and attitudes promoted by the School's informal and hidden curricula.

Other relevant documentation

In addition to the reference detailed above, the Curriculum Policy should be read in conjunction with *Downe House's Mission Statement* and the *School Development Plan*. The School's *Marking, Assessment, Reporting, Differentiation, Learning Skills, Baseline Data and Value Added, Pastoral, PSHE and Extra-Curricular Policies* are also of particular relevance.

Review

The Curriculum Policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headmaster with recommendations for approval made to the Headmistress.

Review Leader: Assistant Headmaster
Reviewed: February 2011
Next review: February 2012