

The Governing Body of Denstone College understands its regulatory responsibilities and will maintain an effective oversight of this policy, by evaluating its effectiveness, and reviewing and implementing change.

Denstone College

Curriculum Policy

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Introduction

The aims of the Denstone College Curriculum are:

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils, giving pupils appropriate experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education.
- To increase specialisation as pupils progress through the school in order that subjects may be studied rigorously and in depth.
- To develop pupils' skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy across subjects.
- To enable pupils to achieve their full potential including the best possible examination results and qualifications for a given individual.
- To prepare pupils for higher education and life outside school through PSHE, Careers and Higher Education programmes.
- To assess and record standards achieved and progress, and to keep pupils, parents and colleagues informed.
- To use assessment to inform curriculum planning and development

The Curriculum is organised in three sections to meet the needs of pupils in the three schools:

1. Junior School (pre-GCSE)
2. Middle School (GCSE/IGCSE)
3. Senior School (AS and A level and preparation for Higher Education)

There are seven year groups traditionally referred to as Forms one to five, lower sixth and upper sixth. These groups coincide with National Curriculum year groups as follows:

Denstone Terminology		NC Year Groups
1 st Form	Junior School	Year 7
2 nd Form		Year 8
3 rd Form		Year 9
4 th Form	Middle School	Year 10
5 th Form		Year 11
Lower 6 th	Senior School	Year 12
Upper 6 th		Year 13

Junior School Curriculum

The Denstone College Junior School Curriculum is organised to meet the needs of pupils in Forms One (Year 7), Two (Year 8) and Three (Year 9). The normal working week is composed of forty-one 40-minute lessons that include some prep lessons.

The subjects studied, together with the number of periods per subject per week, are set out in the following table:

Subject	First Form	Second Form	Third Form
English	5	5	5
Maths	5	5	5
Biology	2	2	2
Chemistry	2	2	2
Physics	2	2	2
French	3	3	3
Spanish	0	2	2
Geography	2	2	2
History	2	2	2
RS	1	1	2
Art	1	2	2
DT	1	1	2
Drama	2	2	2
Library Skills	1	0	0
Music	2	1	1
PE	2	2	2
PSHE	1	1	1 ^{*1}
Computing	1	1	1
Latin	1	0	0
Prep	5	5	3
Total	41	41	41

¹ Headmaster's Lesson

The First Form (year 7) is split into three forms (1J, 1M & 1T). These are broadly based on overall ability (assessed on entry) in that 1M & 1T are the more academically able students with 1J a lower ability groups. All forms follow the same curriculum. Library Skills involves research and reading skills, particularly in using the resources of the library.

The Second Form (Year 8) is split into four forms (2S, 2M, 2J & 2T), with 2M and 2T being broadly higher ability sets. Pupils will study Spanish as well as French. All forms follow the same curriculum.

The Third Form (Year 9) is split into four sets, with 3W introduced to this particular year group as an additional middle ability set.

Maths is streamed separately in the First, Second and Third Forms. Additionally, in the Third Form, English is set separately, with pupils also taught in English-based sets for RS, Geography and History.

Throughout the Junior School the appropriateness of set placings is reviewed at the end of each term. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are withdrawn from MFL lessons in order to be provided with extra tuition in English. There may also be occasional withdrawals, on a rota basis, for individual instrumental music tuition.

Examinations and Assessment

Junior School pupils will be tested at the time of Michaelmas Assessments. These are departmentally organised tests designed to assess attainment and progress. They take place around week eight in the Michaelmas term. Junior School exams take place in June of each academic year. These are formal

examinations and are designed to test the attainment, learning and progress achieved during the year. Standardised MidYis tests are also used to provide baseline information.

Middle School Curriculum

The Middle School curriculum¹ is composed of a mixture of compulsory and optional GCSE and IGCSE courses. Five subjects are compulsory for most students and represent a possible total of eight GCSEs. They are:

- English (IGCSE English Language and IGCSE English Literature)
- Mathematics (IGCSE)
- Science: Separate Science (three GCSEs) or Science / Additional Science (Two GCSEs)
- Modern Foreign Language: French or Spanish (with a few students opting for Supervised Study – see below)
- Religious Studies (incorporating elements of the former PSHE course)

In all the above compulsory subjects, pupils are taught in five sets based on their ability.

Each member of the Middle School is also required to pick up to three optional subjects to study at GCSE. These, together with the seven/eight compulsory subjects, form a typical programme of nine or ten GCSEs. Optional subjects available are:

Art
 Business
 Design Technology (DT)
 Drama
 French (in order to study two modern foreign languages)
 Further Maths
 Geography
 History
 Computer Science
 Music
 Physical Education (PE)

Some students choose Supervised Study rather than studying a language, allowing them to focus on a slightly narrower range of subjects.

The distribution of periods in a normal week is as follows:

Subjects	Periods per week in the 4 th Form	Periods per week in the 5 th Form
English	5	6
Maths	5	5
Science (Dual Award)	9	9
Sciences (Separate)	12	9
Modern Foreign Language	4	4
Religious Studies (inc. PSHE)	3	3

Option 1	4	4
Option 2	4	4
Option 3	4	4
Supervised study (Prep)	3	2
Total	41	41

Supervised private study provides the opportunity for middle school students to make a start with their prep and/or get on with coursework tasks.

Throughout the Middle School, pupils for whom English is an additional language are withdrawn from MFL lessons in order to be provided with extra tuition in English (EAL). There may also be occasional withdrawals, on a rota basis, for individual instrumental music tuition.

Examinations and Assessment

Fifth Form students complete a GCSE 'practice' exam in all subjects during the Lent term.

Fourth Form end-of-year exams in most subjects take place in the Summer term. These are formal assessments and are designed to test the attainment, learning and progress achieved during the year. All external GCSE exams are now sat at the end of the course (normally at the end of the Fifth Form). Throughout the GCSE courses on offer students are continually assessed within departments, providing information for staff, pupils and parents on current progress and likely future outcomes.

Some GCSE courses also have controlled assessment elements for pupils to complete, and these take place at various times in the 4th and 5th form according to individual department schemes of work.

Senior School Curriculum

The Denstone College Senior School Curriculum is organised to meet the needs of students in the Sixth Form. The normal working week is composed of forty-one 40-minute lessons that include some private study lessons. There is a combination of taught and private study periods. This is how academic time is typically allocated:

Below is a summary of the time allocation in the Senior school.

	L6th periods	U6th periods
Subjects	3 or 4 subjects @ 7 periods per subject = 21 or 28	3 subjects @ 8 periods per subject = 24
Private study (including the equivalent of four periods on Saturday morning)	13 - 20	17
Total	41	41

An option scheme operates. Some discussion of sixth form options will take place at the Lent term parents' evening but the scheme is launched fully at the "Progressing to the Sixth Form" evening in the Michaelmas term. Options booklets are distributed before the event and are made available on the school's website. At

this event there is also the opportunity for department representatives to meet potential candidates and parents and provide additional detailed information. Prospective sixth formers also attend an “Options Fair” held at the school. The range and number of AS/A2 subjects on offer is kept under constant review. Subjects offered presently in the Sixth Form are:

Art
Biology
Business
Chemistry
Design Technology
Drama and Theatre Studies
Economics
English Literature
Extended Project (AS equivalent only)
French
Further Mathematics
Geography
Government and Politics
History
Information and Communication Technology (OCR Cambridge Technical Diploma)
Mathematics
Music
Physics
Psychology
Religious Studies
Spanish
Sport (BTEC)

Examinations and Assessment

A Level exams take place according to the exam board schedule in May/June for the U6th. Lower Sixth internal examinations in all A level subjects will be staged during the Summer term. For further details please consult the ‘Senior School Curriculum’ booklet or speak with relevant Head of Department.

Setting in the Junior and Middle Schools

Teaching sets are created and operated at Denstone College with the aim of encouraging pupils to make academic progress through differentiated learning where appropriate. Setting arrangements differ across year groups and between subjects and are subject to regular review and scrutiny.

Entry into First Form

Upon entry into First Form, pupils will be allocated a set based exclusively on entrance exam data in relevant subjects. Maths set places will be allocated according to performance in the maths entrance exam. For other subjects, form allocation is based on the average score in English and Science entrance exams. The number of sets created in First Form will depend on the size of pupils intake in a given year, with three or four sets usually created each year. Setting is academic, not social, and, academic factors are prioritised in all setting decisions.

Over the course of the Michaelmas term pupil progress is monitored closely, with Michaelmas Assessments (sat in November) providing formal assessments in a range of subjects. All pupils will also sit MidYis baseline tests early in the term. A review of setting will then take place at the end of the Michaelmas term, with any changes implemented

at the start of the Lent term. To avoid undue disruption of teaching and learning changes will generally only take place during the academic year where there is a clear academic need for a pupil to move set.

Further assessments will be held by subjects across the remaining months of the academic year, with all First Form pupils sitting Summer examinations in June. Performance in these exams, and especially in core subjects, will be used to review setting ahead of Second Form.

Second Form

Setting in Second Form will continue along the lines of First Form, with any changes in set generally taking place at the start of the Michaelmas or Lent terms.

Third Form

Setting arrangements change somewhat in Third Form, with pupils organised into English sets (3En1, 3En2 etc.). This setting will be based on exam performance in the summer exams in Second Form and other relevant academic data. Pupils are taught some other subjects in their English-based sets, currently RS, Geography and History. Maths continues to be set separately based on performance in the Second Form Maths exam and subsequent assessments throughout the year. Exam performances in subjects other than English and Maths determine the setting for remaining subjects, with pupils being taught in forms (M,T, S, J and/or W) for these subjects.

Every year a good number of new entrants join the College in the third form and an extra teaching set is usually added for all subjects to reflect this increase in pupil numbers. New pupils are allocated teaching sets at the start of the academic year according to entrance exam performance.

Middle School

During the GCSE years pupils are taught in ability sets for English, Maths and Modern Languages. Religious Studies is taught within English sets and all other subjects are taught in groups according to the option choices of pupils.

New pupils joining during the academic year

New pupils joining the College midway through the academic year will, where possible, be placed in sets according to entrance exam performance and other available academic information. If a place in the most appropriate set isn't immediately available then a new pupil may be placed in an alternative set until space becomes available. All new pupils are carefully monitored when they join the College and sets will be reviewed and amended when necessary.

Setting Arrangements – An Overview

	First Form	Second Form	Third Form	Fourth Form	Fifth Form
Maths	Pupils taught in maths-specific sets (1Ma1, 1Ma2 etc.) ¹	Pupils taught in maths-specific sets (2Ma1, 2Ma2 etc.) ¹	Pupils taught in maths-specific sets (3Ma1, 3Ma2 etc.) ¹	Pupils taught in maths-specific sets (4Ma1, 4Ma2 etc.) ²	Pupils taught in maths-specific sets (5Ma1, 5Ma2 etc.) ²
English	Pupils taught in teaching forms (1M, 1T, 1S and/or 1J) ¹	Pupils taught in teaching forms (2M, 2T, 2S and/or 2J) ¹	Pupils taught in English-specific sets (3En1, 3En2, etc.) ¹	Pupils taught in English-specific sets (4En1, 4En2, etc.) ²	Pupils taught in English-specific sets (5En1, 5En2, etc.) ²
RS				Option ⁴	Option ⁴
History				Option ⁴	Option ⁴
Geography			Option ⁴	Option ⁴	
Sciences			Pupils taught in option block groups – either triple or combined science ³	Pupils taught in option block groups – either triple or combined science ³	
Languages			Pupils taught in language-specific sets (4Sp1/2, 4Fr1/2, etc.)	Pupils taught in language-specific sets (5Sp1/2, 5Fr1/2, etc.)	
Art			Option ⁴	Option ⁴	
Drama			Option ⁴	Option ⁴	
Music			Option ⁴	Option ⁴	
Computing			Option ⁴	Option ⁴	
DT	Option ⁴	Option ⁴			

PE				Option ⁴	Option ⁴
PSHE					
Latin					
Library Skills					
Business					

¹The number of teaching sets will depend on the size of the specific year group

²An additional teaching set is usually added at the beginning of the Fourth Form

³Setting on ability takes place within option blocks

⁴Teaching sets based on pupils opting for subject in option blocks

Departmental Management

All departments are required to regularly review and update their schemes of work for all age groups and courses. These schemes of work are stored on the shared staff 'I' drive of the school network for reference. Department Development Plans are also produced and submitted every two years, outlining progress made and future objectives with respect to the College's overall School Development Plan.

All Heads of Department submit a written report to the Director of Studies in the Michaelmas term reviewing the summer public examination results. Further discussion takes place once value-added (ALIS) data becomes available.

Denstone College Handbook

The Curriculum section of the College handbook contains full details of the Denstone College curriculum. This is updated on a regular basis and distributed to all teaching staff.

Learning Support: Special Educational Needs and the teaching of English as an Additional Language

Learning support is the term used to refer to the teaching of English as an Additional Language (EAL) to students from overseas, and meeting the needs of pupils with special needs or learning difficulties.

English as an Additional Language:

Teaching is aimed at developing proficiency in the four main language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

On arrival an initial assessment is made to establish the standard of English in order to help teachers plan future teaching and learning experiences. All lessons are given in small groups varying in size from one to a maximum of eight. Exceptional provision is made, when staffing allows, to provide individual timetables when a lack of English causes problems in other subjects.

External examinations are offered from preliminary to university entrance level.

Special Educational Needs

The school has a Learning Difficulties Policy under the control of the Special Needs Co-ordinator who liaises with teachers, external specialist teachers, educational psychologists and parents as necessary.

All pupils follow the Denstone College Curriculum, including those with Statements of Special Needs, but special educational programmes are devised if necessary and are delivered by two external specialists. These specialists play a key role in helping the school to monitor:

- Progress made by the pupil;
- Effectiveness of the education plan;
- Updated information and advice; and
- Future action.

Timetables are drawn up in consultation with the pupils and parents. Tuition can only take place with parental permission. Each lesson lasts for forty minutes and usually takes place in games and/or activities time. Pupils are taught in pairs.

Comprehensive records are kept on each pupil in the Special Needs filing cabinet in the SCR. These records are available to parents and teachers. All teachers of special needs pupils should be familiar with the contents of the records.

Preparation (Prep)

Pupils receive 2 to 3 subject preps every day in the Junior and Middle Schools. The subjects follow a published timetable. In the Sixth Form prep will usually set at least twice a week per subject. There is no set recommendation for time spent on prep in the Senior School but study periods should be taken into account. Students should be guided towards spending 5 hours per subject per week private study time in the Lower Sixth and 7 hours per subject per week in the Upper Sixth.

Prep should be set according to the prep timetable published by the Director of Studies for 1st to 5th Forms.

Private study time is scheduled for boarders each evening from Monday to Friday. The times vary across the Schools as follows:

School	Times
Senior	7.00 – 8.30 pm
Middle	7.00 – 8.30 pm
Junior	7.00 – 7.45 pm

During this time pupils are not allowed to be out of their place of work or to be engaged in any activity other than academic work.

Pupils are encouraged to complete prep as fully as possible and make every effort to submit work of the highest quality. Pupils who do not understand the prep must seek clarification from their teacher before leaving the lesson. Prep should be entered into the relevant section of the student planner that each pupil is given. Pupils should endeavour to hand in prep – fully completed – at the correct time and place.

There are numerous opportunities to complete prep. The time to do regular preps is during special, timetabled prep lessons in the daytime that are supervised by a member of staff; during evening prep sessions (in the case of boarders); during the evening at home (in the case of day pupils) and at times throughout each weekend.

Supervised prep periods are timetabled for the Middle and Junior School. The first and second forms receive 5 periods per week and the third form receives 3. The fourth receive 3 timetabled prep periods and fifth forms receive 2 periods.

In the Junior School, time spent on prep for each subject set should be:

1st Form 20 minutes – 2 subjects per night - totalling 40 minutes

2nd Form 30 minutes - 2 subjects per night - totalling 60 minutes

3rd Form 30 minutes – 2 subjects per night - totalling 60 minutes

Middle School pupils receive 2 or 3 subject preps every day. The subjects follow a published timetable. Time spent on prep for each subject set should be:

4th and 5th Forms - 2 or 3 subjects @ 2 x 45 minutes or 3 x 30 minutes per subject – totalling 1½ hours.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Careers Guidance

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is delivered as a discreet timetabled subject in the First Form and Second Form. PSHE themes are also included in Religious Studies (RS) lessons from Third Form to Fifth Form and within the whole school PSHE tutorial programme (for all years). Specific year group PSHE talks and events also regularly take place for Middle School and Senior School pupils.

The College seeks to actively promote fundamental British values across all aspects of the curriculum, with these values infused into schemes of work across different department areas. Aspects of citizenship are explicitly delivered within junior school PSHE lessons and many aspects of the tolerance and understanding of different faiths are discussed within the Religious Studies curriculum, a compulsory subject for all junior and middle school pupils. Our aim is to promote such ideas and values across the full range of academic disciplines, however, as well as in other appropriate events, e.g. assemblies, our International Showcase Evening, in chapel, through a range of trips and visits.

Careers, UCAS and subject choice guidance (GCSE/AS/A levels) also form part of the tutorial programme delivered within house tutor groups, as co-ordinated by Heads of House and the Head of Careers. The Head of Careers also organises various careers events during the course of the year and has a rolling programme of individual interviews, concentrated on third form and fifth form pupils, to discuss careers and UCAS-related matters. With the appointment of a full time, non-teaching Head of Careers there are further plans to develop a work experience programme for all fifth form pupils and to regularly provide a rolling programme of careers information to different year groups via tutorials and other organised events.

TJB

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