

PANGBOURNE

— A community where you can flourish —

CURRICULUM POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Pangbourne College recruits pupils at 11, 13 and 16 from a relatively broad range of ability. The curriculum offers a broad, balanced education to its students. It provides equal access for all its students to linguistic, mathematical, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative areas. The specification in each subject is designed to offer continuity and progression of learning.

DIFFERENTIATION

The College endeavours to ensure that programmes of study are suited to all. Differentiation in the teaching and learning process ensures that there is access and opportunity for all students to learn and make progress according to their abilities. Attention is given at all levels to students reflecting upon the process of learning. More details can be found in the Teaching and Learning Policy.

The College's Learning Support department, aided by whole staff INSET, has strengthened awareness that attention to the needs of individual pupils is essential to effective learning for all. Pupils with diagnosed learning needs [SEN] work with the Learning Support department at curriculum times made available by reducing the breadth of subjects. Where this is not desirable, pupils will liaise with the LS department through use of Enrichment time in the afternoon. More details can be found in the SEN Policy.

The High Potential Achiever (HPA) programme identifies pupils who might respond to further challenge. This might be provided through classroom or supra-curricular activities such as projects, events or mentoring. More details can be found in the HPA policy.

Class teachers readily access shared SEN and HPA data from Class Charts.

CURRICULUM CONTENT

Year 7 to Year 9 (Key Stage 3)

The curriculum in Key Stage 3 should continue the development which has taken place before a pupils' arrival at Pangbourne. There are three key focus areas of the Key Stage 3 curriculum:

1. The acquisition of knowledge, both declarative (i.e. facts) and procedural (i.e skills) which will enable pupils to engage effectively with their ongoing education.
2. The broadening of pupils' awareness of the wider world.
3. The understanding of how effective learning takes place and the strategies which can be adopted by pupils to enhance their own progression.

Dunbar (Year 7 and Year 8)

The curriculum for Dunbar comprises 27 periods per week which are made up as follows:

4 PERIODS PER WEEK	2 PERIODS PER WEEK	1 PERIOD PER WEEK
English*	Geography	Art
Maths*	History*	Computer Science*
Science*	Modern Foreign Language	Drama
		Design Technology
		Music
		PE
		PSHCE
		Religious Studies*

There are two classes in each year group.

In subjects marked with an asterix, pupils are taught in classes which are broadly based on ability. Allocations are initially made based on a pupils' performance in the baseline assessments which take place during induction in September but allocations are reviewed after each main assessment point by the Head of Key Stage 3. The higher ability ('A') group in each year is normally slightly larger so that the pupils in the lower ability ('B') group can benefit from more individual support. The 'B' group is also supported by a teaching assistant.

The remaining subjects are taught in randomly allocated groups of approximately the same size to ensure that pupils work with a variety of peers during the week.

Pupils also have one Mastery session per week. This session includes the Theory of Learning strand to the curriculum and has been developed to meet the needs of the pupils in becoming more independent in their approach to their learning. It works in tandem with the development of teachers'

awareness and use of cognitive science within their teaching to ensure that instruction leads to effective learning. Pupils are taught a simplified model of learning which explains how their brain deals with new information. They are given strategies which they can use in order to improve their learning and metacognitive approaches to tackling new problems. These techniques are applied to learning the core content identified by the Heads of Department.

Year 9

The curriculum for Year 9 comprises 27 periods per week which are made up as follows:

3 PERIODS PER WEEK	2 PERIODS PER WEEK	1 PERIOD PER WEEK
English*	Biology*	Art
Maths*	Chemistry*	Computer Science*
	Geography	Drama
	History	Design Technology
	Modern Foreign Language*	Music
	Physics*	PE
		PSHCE
		Religious Studies

There might be five or six classes in Year 9 depending on the size of the year group. Once the year group reaches 90 pupils, it is likely that we will add a sixth class to keep average class sizes small.

As with the Dunbar years, some subjects are taught in groups based on ability (those marked with an asterix) and some are in mixed ability groups. English, Maths and Science have independent ability sets to improve the individual provision meaning that a pupil might be in a top set in one subject but in a lower set for another subject. The sets in Computer Science are the same as those in Maths. Allocations are initially made based on a pupils' performance in the baseline assessments which take place during induction in September but allocations are reviewed after each main assessment point by the Head of Key Stage 3. The higher ability groups are normally slightly larger so that the pupils in the lower ability groups can benefit from more individual support.

Modern Foreign Language sets are initially determined by the choice of language. We will aim to offer one class for German, one class for Spanish and three or four classes for French depending on the size of the year group and their language choices. Modern Foreign Languages in Year 9 are not 'ab initio' courses; pupils must have an appropriate level of understanding of the language chosen (i.e. it should have been studied during Year 7 and Year 8 or there should be some native-speaker ability). There is also an option to follow a programme which does not include a foreign language with those periods being used for learning support or completion of prep. This should be discussed with the Head of Learning Support and the Head of MFL at the end of Year 8.

The remaining subjects are taught in randomly allocated groups of approximately the same size to ensure that pupils work with a variety of peers during the week.

Pupils also have one Mastery session per week. This session includes the Theory of Learning strand to the curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of the pupils in becoming more independent in their approach to their learning. It works in tandem with the development of teachers' awareness and use of cognitive science within their teaching to ensure that instruction leads to effective learning. Pupils are taught a simplified model of learning which explains how their brain deals with new information. They are given strategies which they can use in order to improve their learning and metacognitive approaches to tackling new problems. These techniques are applied to learning the core content identified by the Heads of Department.

Year 10 and Year 11 (Key Stage 4)

All pupils in Key Stage 4 study a core curriculum of English (Language and Literature as separate qualifications but both taught during English lessons), Maths, Science and PSHCE.

In all core subjects, pupils are taught in sets based on ability. Allocations are initially made based on a pupils' performance in the baseline assessments which take place at the start of Year 10 but allocations are reviewed after each main assessment point by the Heads of the relevant departments and the Head of Key Stage 4. Pupils in the top set for Maths will be considered for the [Level 2 Certificate in Further Maths](#).

In Science, pupils can follow a course in Combined Science which covers all three disciplines (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) but at a slightly reduced depth. If pupils choose this option, they will have two lessons per week in each of the science disciplines as well as a separate exams in each. They will receive a 'double grade' across all of the exams at the end of the course. Alternatively, pupils can take a GCSE in each science separately. This covers more content and is a better preparation for further study in the Sciences at A Level. If pupils choose this option, they will have three lessons per week in each discipline and they will choose only three optional subjects rather than four. Pupils and parents will be given advice by science teachers, the Head of Science and the Heads of Key Stage 3 and 4 about which option might be most appropriate.

Pupils then choose their options (three for those taking the individual sciences and four for those taking the Combined Science course) from: Art, Business, Computer Science, Design Technology, Drama, French, Geography, German, History, Music, Physical Education, Religious Studies and Spanish. Pupils are required to take at least one of History, Geography or Religious Studies. We advise pupils to study at least one of French, Spanish or German where possible. The normal expectation is that pupils will be taking nine GCSE subjects. In specific, individual circumstances, it might be possible to design a programme with more or fewer GCSE subjects but this is dependent on our ability to integrate such a programme into the normal routine. Any such request should be raised as early as possible with the Head of Key Stage 4 in the first instance.

More information about each subject can be found on the relevant exam board website.

AQA GCSE	EDEXCEL GCSE	EDEXCEL IGCSE	EDUQAS GCSE	OCR GCSE
Art	Music	Maths	Design Technology	Computer Science
Biology		English Language	Drama	Religious Studies
Business		English Literature		
Chemistry				

Combined Science
French
Geography
German
History
Physical Education
Physics
Spanish

The process for choosing GCSE options is managed by the Heads of KS3 and KS4 as outlined in the [‘Transitions’](#) section below.

Sixth Form

Pangbourne offers a range of A Level and BTEC Diploma subjects in the Sixth Form. Most students choose “3 plus 1”, that is 3 A level or BTEC courses plus an additional qualification. We do not offer AS qualifications apart from in exceptional circumstances (such as a pupil leaving at the end of the Lower Sixth Year).

Main qualifications (A Levels or BTECs) will be delivered in four blocks which each receive seven periods per week. Additional qualifications are delivered in two periods per week. The final period in each week is for a General Studies session. As the majority of pupils will take three main qualifications, there will be some study periods during the week where they do not have an assigned lesson. These are not ‘free’ periods and pupils are expected to be completing work in their cabins or in the library during this time.

The process for choosing Sixth Form options is managed by the Head of KS4 and the Head of Sixth Form as outlined in the [‘Transitions’](#) section below.

The subjects currently on offer in the Sixth Form are:

A level

AQA	CAMBRIDGE	EDEXCEL	EDUQAS	OCR
Art (Fine Art)	Geography	Biology	Drama & Theatre	Computer Science
Art (Photography)		Business	Music	
French		Chemistry		
German		Economics		
History		English Literature		
Maths		Physical Education		

Further Maths
Physics
Politics
Psychology
Sociology
Spanish

Religious Studies

BTEC

BTEC qualifications offer pupils to take a more vocational approach to their studies. Many are delivered as an alternative to the A Level equivalent by the same teaching staff. The main differences between BTEC and A Level are that the BTEC qualifications will include more assessment during the course in the form of projects or extended assignments. Examined assessments often require students to respond to a brief which is provided in advance. There is also an opportunity to retake component within a BTEC (although this does incur an additional fee). Currently, the College offers BTEC qualifications in [Art & Design](#), [Enterprise & Entrepreneurship](#), [Creative Media Production](#) and [Sport](#) at **Extended Certificate** level which is the equivalent to a single A Level. Sport is also offered as a **Diploma** which is the equivalent of two A Levels and is considered to be two choices. BTECs are only offered through Edexcel and more information can be found on the relevant subject pages on their website.

Additional Qualifications

Alongside their main choices, pupils may choose to pursue an additional qualification which will receive two periods per week. The current range of additional qualifications is:

- [Extended Project Qualification \(EPQ\)](#)
- [Drama Trinity](#)
- [Mathematical Studies \(Core Maths\)](#)
- Mathematics Repeat (for those that have not passed GCSE Maths at the first attempt)
- English Repeat (for those that have not passed GCSE English Language at the first attempt)

STATUTORY PROVISION: CAREERS, PSHCE, RSE AND BRITISH VALUES

PSCE

Personal, Social, Health, and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) is taught as a discrete subject from Year 7 to Year 11. The course is designed by the Head of PSHCE in collaboration with the Deputy Head Pastoral, Deputy Head Character and Routines, Assistant Head Pupil Mental Wellbeing and Assistant Head Boarding. It is delivered by a trained team of specialists who meet weekly to discuss the course and PSHCE provision. It is further supplemented by a range of external, expert speakers who deliver workshops on specific aspects of PSHCE. The course is designed to help students to lead confident, healthy, responsible lives in a democratic, tolerant and pluralist society.

Students have the opportunity to reflect on their own experience and development, whilst at the same time showing understanding of others. PSHCE is delivered to Sixth Form students through the tutorial system and is supplemented with external, expert speakers through the General Studies programme and PSHCE talks. More information can be found in the [PSHCE Policy](#) and PSHCE Programme of Study.

RSE

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is primarily delivered through timetabled PSHCE lessons by the same team of trained specialists. Specific aspects of RSE are also delivered through Science lessons. Delivery is supplemented by a range of external, expert speakers. [More information can be found in the RSE policy.](#)

Careers

We understand that careers education is far more than simply helping pupils to choose a university course. An effective careers education should provide pupils with an awareness of the plethora of options available, guidance on navigating these options and development of skills which will enable pupils to be successful in the world of work. As such, many aspects of careers education at Pangbourne are delivered through activities which are not specifically labelled as careers. The World Economic Forum (WEF) has identified 16 key skills for success in the 21st Century and development of these would be considered part of our career development programme for pupils.

Foundational Literacies	Competencies	Character Qualities
Literacy	Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving	Curiosity
Numeracy	Creativity	Initiative
Scientific Literacy	Communication	Perseverance/grit
ICT Literacy	Collaboration	Adaptability
Financial Literacy		Leadership
Cultural and Civic Literacy		Social and Cultural Awareness

In the Sixth Form the Head of Careers coordinates the My UniChoices programme, delivered in tutorial time. This culminates in the 'Taking Responsibility' course at the end of the Lower Sixth when, for three days, the year group works in teams to develop an understanding of how to take responsibility for others and for themselves.

In the Upper Sixth tutors prepare students for university while the Head of General Studies arranges a series of weekly lectures from outside speakers on a diverse range of subjects – exploration, the Law, politics, the media and comparative religions.

British Values

The British Values are Democracy, the Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance. Many of these are demonstrated in the College Flag Values, Code of Conduct and elsewhere. They play a significant role in the PSHCE and General Studies programmes but are also evident in teaching across subjects and year groups. More information about how the British Values are developed through the curriculum can be found in the [British Values Audit](#).

MANAGEMENT

The curriculum is delivered through academic departments, each managed by a Head of Department. Each Head of Department reports to either the Deputy Head Academic or the Assistant Head - Teacher Development and Expertise.

Monitoring of pupil progression across their subjects is undertaken by the academic tutor who is overseen by the relevant Head of Section.

- Head of 6th Form: Indy Kaur
- Head of KS4: Abbie Stephenson
- Head of KS3: Anthony Hammond (from Sept 2025)

TRANSITIONS AND SUBJECT SELECTION

Transitions represent important milestones in the academic career of pupils and there are specific processes in place to make sure that they are aware of the changes.

Joining Year 7

The transition from Year 6 to Year 7 is significant for pupils as they move from a primary school setting where they are likely to have lessons from a relatively small number of teachers and in a small number of classrooms.

All pupils will receive an induction to the College in September which will help them orient themselves within the campus, identify where they will have their lessons and outline the structure of the day.

It is likely that the curriculum will continue the development of subjects where there has been previous study at primary school. Our teachers are aware of what is studied at the majority of local schools and have built a curriculum which aims to pick up where their previous study stopped rather than starting again from scratch.

Joining Year 9

The transition from Year 8 to Year 9 is significant for both internal pupils moving up from Dunbar into one of the Senior Divisions as well as for pupils joining the College. Most of the change is of a pastoral nature and pupils will be supported by the teams of staff within Divisions and the induction days in September.

Academically, pupils are expected to take the full range subjects outlined above. The only option in Year 9 is the choice of Modern Foreign Language. For pupils progressing internally from Dunbar, their Language will be determined by the one which they have studied during Year 7 and Year 8. For those pupils joining from another school, they can choose any Modern Foreign Language which has been studied as part of the regular timetable during Year 7 and Year 8. Study of a language as a club or experience of having lived in a country where it is a dominant language are not considered sufficient. Where a child has a degree of native speaker expertise in a language, they might be permitted to join a Year 9 course at the discretion of the Head of MFL. Choices about the language to be studied should be made during the summer term of Year 8.

Making GCSE choices (Year 9 into Year 10)

The process for choosing GCSE subjects begins in the Michaelmas term of Year 9. The steps below are those which will apply to the whole year group but pupils and parents are always welcome to discuss choices at any stage with the tutor, PDL or Head of KS3.

- Early November: Pupils and parents will be provided with the GCSE options booklet which will include all of the relevant information about the courses offered.
- Late November/Early December: Pupils will be asked to complete an 'initial thoughts' survey about the subjects which they are considering. This is not a binding choice and is done to ensure that we can recruit additional staff if necessary or plan for the introduction of new courses if there is a significant demand.
- January/February: Pupils will receive presentations from subject teams about the GCSE courses on offer.

- Throughout the Lent term: each pupil will be interviewed about their GCSE choices by an experienced member of academic staff.
- 12 March 2026 for the current year - The deadline for submission of GCSE choices. Failure to submit choices by this deadline will mean that the specific combination of choices will not be considered when constructing the option blocks and deciding on how many sets will be offered for each subject. Pupils will need to make their choices once the option blocks are published and certain combinations might not be possible.
- Easter Holiday: the option blocks will be constructed to enable as many pupils as possible to take their preferred combination of subjects. We are normally able to satisfy more than 95% of all pupils' preferences.
- Summer term: changes to choices are possible throughout the summer term as long as:
 - The desired combination is possible within the published option blocks
 - There is space in the sets to accommodate the changes

Making Sixth Form choices (Year 11 into Lower Sixth)

The process for choosing Sixth Form subjects begins in the Summer term of Year 10. The steps below are those which will apply to the whole year group but pupils and parents are always welcome to discuss choices at any stage with the tutor, HOM or Head of KS4.

- June of Year 10: An evening event to introduce pupils to the Sixth Form at Pangbourne. This will include presentations from key members of staff as well as opportunities to hear about subject and activities available at Sixth Form. Pupils and parents will be provided with the A Level options booklet which will include all of the relevant information about the courses offered.
- October/November of Year 11: Pupils will have a Sixth Form Taster Day when they will attend lessons in Sixth Form subjects. Pupils will be able to choose six different subjects and we would advise them to select as many 'possibility' subjects as they can rather than those which they are absolutely sure that they would like to choose.
- Late November/Early December: Pupils will be asked to complete an 'initial thoughts' survey about the subjects which they are considering. This is not a binding choice and is done to ensure that we can recruit additional staff if necessary or plan for the introduction of new courses if there is a significant demand.
- Throughout the Lent term: each pupil will be interviewed about their A Level choices by a member of AMT or an experienced member of academic staff.
- February: The Trial Exams will provide an indication about suitability for Sixth Form courses and the parents' event which follows is an opportunity to discuss both progress at GCSE and also Sixth Form choices.
- Late February: The Sixth Form choices form will be sent out.
- 17 March 2026: The deadline for submission of Sixth Form choices. Failure to submit choices by this deadline will mean that the specific combination of choices will not be considered when constructing the option blocks and deciding on how many sets will be offered for each subject. Pupils will need to make their choices once the option blocks are published and certain combinations might not be possible.
- Late March: the option blocks will be constructed to enable as many pupils as possible to take their preferred combination of subjects. We are normally able to satisfy more than 90% of all pupils' preferences.
- Summer term: changes to choices are possible throughout the summer term as long as:
 - The desired combination is possible within the published option blocks
 - There is space in the sets to accommodate the changes
 - There are no concerns about the pupil's ability to achieve the course entry requirements

CHANGES TO THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is under constant review to ensure that it effectively meets the needs of the pupils at each stage of their development. As such, modifications to the curriculum can occur from time to time. We will provide as much notice as possible of these changes along with a rationale.

Individual Heads of Department and subject teams are responsible for the development of curricula within their subject areas and these take the form of a programme of study. The programme of study will be reviewed within subject areas annually.

Changes with wider implications will be considered by SLT and might include such changes as:

- **Change to an examination board for an existing subject.** The Head of Department will make a proposal to change to a different examination board along with a justification. SLT will discuss the change but, given the expertise of the Head of Department, such a change will only be blocked if there are clearly detrimental consequences. In normal circumstances, this should be decided by the January preceding the start of the course. In certain circumstances, it might be necessary to make a change with a shorter notice period if the benefits are considered substantial.
- **Changes of options within an examined course.** This will follow the procedure outlined above.
- **The addition of a subject to the curriculum.** There are two possible routes for a subject addition:
 - At the request of a Head of Department. If a Head of Department feels that they have the capacity to offer an additional course and that doing so will meet the needs of the pupils, they should submit a short proposal to be discussed at AMT. The Head of Department will be invited to the discussion. The proposal should include how the course would be staffed and resourced, the benefit to the pupils and a consideration of the extent to which it might impact on other subjects already offered. The proposal for an additional course should be submitted at least a year in advance of the proposed introduction. A recommendation will be made to SLT who will decide on whether the addition should proceed.
 - At the request of pupils (both existing and potential). If it emerges that there is a significant demand for a subject not currently offered then AMT will consider whether it could be added. This will include consideration of the additional requirements for staff and resources, the extent to which any new course might impact existing courses, the extent to which the course will meet the needs of our pupils on an ongoing basis and the level of demand. The level of demand will normally be assessed by the inclusion of potential new courses in the 'initial thoughts' survey which takes place in November of Year 11. AMT will also bear in mind that introducing a course is easier than withdrawing a course and, therefore, there needs to be demonstrable benefit of the addition. A recommendation will be made to SLT who will decide on whether the addition should proceed.
- **Temporary removal of a subject from the curriculum.** The list of subjects given above are those which will be offered to pupils each year. In the vast majority of cases, there is sufficient uptake to ensure that a viable course can be offered. However, it is possible that there is insufficient demand for a subject. This might be because the course requires a certain minimum number of pupils or because offering the subject will not represent an effective use of the College resources. In such circumstances, there are three possible options which will be considered:

- The subject will be offered but on a reduced number of periods of contact time.
 - The subject will be offered wholly or partially through KeyStone Educational, our trusted provider of online tuition (please note that a fee supplement might be levied for such provision).
 - The subject will be withdrawn for the year. This is considered a 'last resort' and we will exhaust all possibilities to avoid withdrawing a course.
- **Permanent removal of a subject from the curriculum.** If it becomes clear that a subject provides little benefit to the pupils then SLT will consider whether it should be withdrawn. They will consider historical uptake and performance, pupil demand, the existence of possible alternatives within our curriculum and the impact on College resources. SLT will make a recommendation to the Head who will have the ultimate decision.