



CURRICULUM POLICY	
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Curriculum Policy

INTRODUCTION

At Ballard, we foster an academically rigorous and supportive learning environment. Our commitment to effective teaching empowers all pupils to achieve their personal best, ensuring high academic standards and thorough preparation for future education and the workforce. This foundation is reinforced by the Ballard Values, emphasising the rights and responsibilities of active citizenship. Our diverse range of activities and curriculum not only enhance self-confidence but also contribute to personal growth, encouraging lifelong interests and a commitment to community service.

The School's curriculum aims to offer a broad and balanced education reflecting the needs of pupils of all abilities and across the full age range.

The Ballard Curriculum aims:

- To contribute effectively to pupils' intellectual, physical, and personal attainment and development.
- To be appropriate for the age, ability, gender and ethnic background of all pupils.
- To prepare the pupils for the next stage in their education, training, or employment.
- To provide continuity and progression through the key stages, so that learning thresholds are achieved.
- To provide a suitable and effective learning environment for all pupils including those requiring special provision, Most Able pupils and those with any form of learning difficulty.
- To provide an equality of opportunity for all pupils to learn and progress.
- To provide access to a wide range of co-curricular activities for the purpose of enrichment and exposure to challenging and exciting curriculum material.
- To foster an environment where each pupil becomes an inquisitive, confident and independent learner.

Breadth of the Ballard Curriculum

The curriculum offered at Ballard School aims to provide a wide range of opportunity in order to promote effective learning and personal growth. Schemes of work and programmes of study are in place for all subject areas and sections of the school. The School's curriculum aims to provide all pupils of compulsory school age with an experience in the following areas:

- Linguistic and cultural
- Mathematical
- Scientific
- Technological
- Human and social
- Physical
- Aesthetic and creative

For a full description of the School's contribution to each area of experience please refer to Appendix 1.

Teaching Week

The teaching week is designed around a one-week teaching cycle of the following hours:

- **Pre-Prep:**
5 days; 3 x 50-minute lessons in the morning and 3 x 50-minute lessons in the afternoon, totalling 5 hours lesson time throughout the day.
- **Lower Prep:**
5 days; 3 x 50-minute lessons in the morning and 3 x 50-minute lessons in the afternoon.
- **Upper Prep:**
5 days; 4 x 50-minute lessons in the morning and 2 x 50-minute lessons in the afternoon.
- **Senior School:**
5 days; 4 x 50-minute lessons in the morning and 2 x 50-minute lessons in the afternoon.

There are double lessons to provide more opportunities to take place in the curriculum, for example Maths, English and Science and the creative subjects all benefit. In Years 10-11 every subject has at least one double lesson.

Organisation of the Curriculum

The curriculum is organised so that teaching groups are small. It is the aim to keep the maximum class size no larger than 20 pupils. In the School, the average size of each teaching group is most likely to be 14.

The higher ability sets within the core subjects have the higher-class sizes, the lower ability sets having the smaller numbers to ensure closer and more individual support. Sets are designed for targeted and differentiated learning where every learner is challenged academically. Examples include the following:

- Year 10 & 11 cohorts of 4 form entry are split into 5 sets for targeted foundation / higher tier material
- Year 9 MFL operates with a higher / lower group in both French and Spanish to stretch and challenge at an appropriate pace
- Science sets allow for pupils to access pathways to Combined Science or separate Biology, Chemistry, Physics qualifications.

The School currently groups children for teaching in several different ways:

- Form groups - mixed ability
- Sets – created using a combination of professional judgement and internal assessment data
- Bands - higher and lower, based on prior attainment using department tracking data and guided by standardised GL data for Years 10 and 11 (English, Maths and Science)
- GCSE years only - Option blocks (mixed ability or sets depending on numbers)

Criteria for Banding

The School sometimes operates a banding system to measure progress against. Departments have input into baseline banding start points each September which is derived from GL tests. The decision to stream is reviewed every year for each year group and is based on both the individual needs and ability range of pupils within the year group. Every child is looked at on an individual basis before being placed in a stream and the following areas are taken into consideration:

- Academic abilities; which considers the end of year attainment in formal examinations, from GL assessments, teacher assessment, as well as the verbal and non-verbal reasoning scores.

- Learning differences; where a specific difficulty is preventing a pupil from scoring highly in more formal tests but has strong underlying ability.
- Pastoral needs; where we feel a pupil would benefit from a chance to consolidate more often or a more challenging approach to academics.
- Social needs; where a pupil is known to work particularly well within a specific group of individuals.

Curriculum Model

Pre-Prep

Year	English	Maths	Science	RS	Art/Link Topic/Humanities Teacher & Pupil Led Activities	Technology	French	Music	Forest School	Dance	Golden Time	PSHE/PSHD	PE & Gymnastics
R	5	5		1	10	1		1	1	1	1	1	3
1 Form													
1	5	5	1	1	7	1	2	1		1	1	1	3
1 Form													
2	5	5	1	1	8		2	1		1	1	1	3
1 Form													

Curriculum Rotations/Specific Setup:

Forest School operates on a two-week rotation alongside Link Topics.

Physical Education, French, Dance, Gymnastics and Music are taught by specialist teachers

Lower Prep

Year	English	Maths	Science	Humanities	RS	MFL	Art	Technology	Music	Ex Arts	Forest School	ICT	PE, Gymnastics & Dance	PSHE
	Form	Form	Form	Form	Form	Form	Form	Form	Form	Mixed	Form	Form	Year	Form
3	6	5	2	2	1	1	2		1	2	1	1	5	1
2 Forms														
4	6	5	2	1	1	2	2		1	2	1	1	5	1
2 Forms														
5	6	5	2	1	1	2	2		1	2	1	1	5	1
2 Forms														

Curriculum Rotations/Specific Setup:

Forest School operates on a rotation with Humanities.

Expressive Arts is taught with Years 3 & 4 together and Years 5 & 6 together.

Design Tech, Art and rotate every term.

Upper Prep

Year	English	Maths	Science	History	Geography	RS	Art & Technology	ICT	Music	PSHE	PE & Dance	MFL	Expressive Arts
	Form	Set	Form	Form	Form	Form	Mixed	Form	Form	Year	Year	Set	Form
6	5	5	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	2	2
2 Forms		2 sets											
	Form	Set	Form	Form	Form	Form	Mixed	Form	Form	Year	Year	Set	Form
7	4	4	3	1	2	1	4	1	1	1	4	3	1
4 Forms		4 sets											
	Form	Set	Form	Form	Form	Form	Mixed	Form	Form	Year	Year	Set	Form
8	4	4	3	2	1	1	4	1	1	1	4	3	1
4 Forms		4 sets											

Curriculum Rotations/Specific Setup:

Expressive Arts is taught with Years 5 & 6 together.

Design Tech (x 2) and Food Tech rotate every term.

French and Spanish is taught concurrently in Year 7 with language pathway chosen in Spring Term of Year 7.

Performing Arts (Drama and Dance) is taught for half a year each rotating each half term.

Senior School

Set 1 Maths pupils have the opportunity to study GCSE Statistics on a fast track course (1 year) in Year 10 as part of the co-curricular programme

Pupils who are native speakers of Spanish or French have the opportunity to take the GCSE in Year 10

Year	English	Maths	Science	History	Geography	RS	Art & Textiles	Technology	ICT	Music	PSHE	MFL	PE & Games	Expressive Arts
	Form	Set	Form	Form	Form	Form	Form	Mixed	Form	Form	Form	Set	Year	Form
9	4	4	3	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	1
4 Forms	4 sets	4 sets	4 sets											

Year	English	Maths	Science	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	PSHE	PE
	Set	Set	Set	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Year	Year
10	5	4	5 + Tutor	3	3	3	3	1	3
4 Forms	4 sets	5 sets	4 sets						

Year	English	Maths	Science	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	PSHE	PE
	Set	Set	Set	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Year	Year
11	5	4	5 + Tutor	3	3	3	3	1	3
4 Forms	4 sets	5 sets	4 sets						

A typical option block model is below:

Option blocks vary year on year depending on pupil choices and combinations to minimise clashes for first choice combinations from approximately 19 options.

Block A	Block B	Block C	Block D
PE GCSE	DT	DT	DT
Music	Geography	Geography	Spanish
ICT	Spanish	Business Studies	Business Studies
History	French	Dance	Drama
Religious Studies	Textiles	Computer Science	PE GCSE
	Art	Food Technology	Separate Science
		History	

Progression and Continuity

Whilst Ballard School is not confined to the requirements of the National Curriculum per se, each subject area does broadly follow National Curriculum guidelines in order to provide progression through the key stages. Heads of department have the opportunity to select their chosen GCSE / IGCSE course they feel best suits the pupils.

The School is divided into four sections: Pre-Prep (Nursery to Year 2), Lower Prep (Years 3 to 5), Upper Prep (Years 6 to 8), and Senior School (Years 9 to 11). Years 1 to 5 have Pre-Prep and Lower Prep Curriculum Co-ordinators, who have oversight of all Maths, English and the Humanities subjects. They meet regularly with the Heads of Department in the Upper Prep/Senior School for these subjects to discuss programme of studies and progression throughout School. Heads of Department for English, Maths, Science, French, Spanish, Art, DT, Music, Performing Arts and PE cover Years 3 to 11 and thus have overview of progression and expectations. In the Pre-Prep and Lower Prep, all subject coverage and content is monitored by the Heads of Section. Regular meetings with Co-ordinators who oversee Years 3-5 take place throughout the year to ensure continuity and progression.

In addition, and to facilitate effective progression from Pre Prep to Lower Prep to Upper Prep, it is Ballard School practice to use specialist subject staff where appropriate lower down the school. This includes the delivery of MFL, Expressive Arts, DT, PE, RS, Gymnastics and PSHE.

Special Educational Needs (SEND) & Department of Enhanced Learning (DEL)

In terms of content and organisation the curriculum takes account of the needs of those pupils requiring special provision. Please refer to Ballard's [SEND Policy](#).

Most Able

We endeavour to meet the needs of every pupil, including the Most Able.

At Ballard the most able pupils are identified through the triangulation of GL data, internal assessments and professional judgment using departmental specific criteria.

This results in approximately 8-10% of each year group in each subject being identified as most able.

A smaller group of pupils are also identified who fall into the category of most able across five or more subjects.

We aim to identify pupils' strengths and to develop them through:

1. Teaching and learning strategies specific to most able pupils including the creation of tasks which provide high challenge and promote higher order thinking skills.
2. Extend pupils' thinking skills through effective questioning.
3. Plan work so that stretch and challenge tasks are always available for the most able, allowing for flexibility to adapt to changing needs/directions.
4. Differentiate appropriately through stimuli, resources, tasks, outcomes and responses.
5. Provide wide variety in what is prepared for the pupils and in what they are asked to do; set individual targets, not class targets; set individual homework where appropriate.
6. Encourage pupils to become independent learners by organising their own work; carrying out unaided tasks which stretch their capabilities; making choices about their work; developing the ability to evaluate their work and so become self-critical; taking ownership of their learning.

Provision beyond the classroom:

Outside the classroom environment Ballard aims to provide:

- a wide range of extra-curricular activities including after-school clubs (as part of the Co-Curricular Programme);
- A Scholarship Programme;
- opportunities for entering subject specific competitions;
- guidance and support for pupils in accessing opportunities to develop their specialism out of school;
- the use of outside agencies and experts where appropriate.

In terms of content and organisation the curriculum takes account of the needs of those pupils identified as being Most Able please refer to Ballard's [MA Policy](#).

The Most Able Policy

Co-Curricular

Ballard has an extensive Activities and Trips Programme that supports the curriculum through an enrichment (subject specific clubs) and trips programme alongside academic support (GCSE Raising Attainment, homework support and revision sessions). Please refer to Ballard's [Co-Curricular Policy](#). Cocurricular activities complement the curriculum and allow for extension provision grouped into the following categories:

- Sport, Health & Wellbeing
- Academic Enrichment, Stretch & Challenge
- Academic, Homework Support
- GCSE Raising Attainment
- Community Contribution & Engagement

Personal Development

Personal Social Health and Economic education including Careers and Citizenship is delivered explicitly through weekly dedicated PSHE curriculum lessons across the school from Year 1 to Year 11. This is supported by a comprehensive tutor programme, section and whole school assemblies and career drop down days.

For more detail, please refer to Ballard's shared Curriculum Overviews and [PSHE and RSE Policy](#).

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

Ballard pupils receive age-appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance, co-ordinated by the Careers Lead and Head of PSHE throughout their time at Ballard.

This provision is designed to reflect the Gatsby Benchmarks and support the Career Development Institute's CDI Framework as stated by the DfE. This complements the PSHE strand 'Living in the Wider World.'

CEIAG includes the following at Ballard:

- Year 10 Work Experience
- 1to1 Careers Meeting for every pupil in Year 9 with an external, independent advisor
- Annual Post 16 Careers Exhibition
- 6th Form mock interviews in Year 11
- 1-1 specialist careers guidance in the form time programme
- 3 X dedicated careers sessions in form time per term (Years 6-11)
- PSHE lessons focused on the 'Living in the Wider World' strand (Years 1-11)

For more detailed information please refer to Ballard's [CEIAG Policy](#).

John Walter, Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Oliver Rose, Director of Teaching & Learning
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Policy Log

Creation Date	Version	Author	Next Review
September 2021	1	Matthew Higgins	September 2022
September 2022	2	Matthew Higgins	September 2023
September 2023	3	Matthew Higgins and Oliver Rose	September 2024
September 2024	4	John Walter & Oliver Rose	September 2025
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APPENDIX 1

Ballard Curriculum contribution to the seven areas of experience.

1. Linguistic and Cultural

At Ballard School we aim to develop the ability of pupils to communicate effectively, thus increasing their command of language through listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

These aims apply essentially to the teaching of English. However, they also apply to the teaching of other languages at Ballard.

French is taught from Year 1, with the introduction of Spanish alongside French from Year 4. Pupils then choose their language pathways in Year 7 and focus on one language only until the end of Year 9.

2. Mathematical

As a core subject, Mathematics is taught throughout the Junior and Senior schools. Ballard School aims to develop a knowledge and understanding of mathematical principles using a variety of teaching methods including practical activities, exploration, and discussion. It is our aim to build a confidence and love of numbers with our pupils. There are many opportunities for cross curricular Mathematical learning, including Science and Geography lessons where core skills are reinforced.

Topics are first introduced at a simple level and are revisited at intervals extending previous knowledge. Lesson by lesson our pupils' understanding of the subject is both reinforced and enlarged. The more able pupil is constantly stimulated by more challenging questions which require them to transfer their skills between topics and apply their knowledge. Those pupils who require a little extra time and consolidation benefit from regular reinforcement allowing them to develop confidence through success.

Pupils at Ballard School are given the opportunity to follow Further Maths and Additional Maths as well as IGCSE Mathematics in Year 11. Our most able pupils also take part in local and national competitions such as the prestigious UK Maths Challenge provided by the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust.

3. Scientific

Science is also a core subject throughout the School, and the curriculum aims to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of nature, materials, and forces. It aims to develop those skills associated with Science as a process of enquiry; for example, by observing, forming hypotheses, conducting experiments, and recording findings.

Study at KS3 is designed to develop the child's scientific maturity, focussing on key threshold concepts and understanding how they relate to the world in which we live. Important foundations are laid from which to embark upon the GCSE courses through a bespoke course of KS3 study developed at Ballard.

The GCSE course starts during Year 9. At GCSE, pupils motivated by further study in Science and demonstrating an aptitude to excel are encouraged to study towards three GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. They are allocated eight periods (plus one tutor period) a week to follow this course, three periods coming from the Option Blocks. They sit all of their exams at the end of a 3-year course in Year 11. The remainder of the Year group follow a 3-year 'Combined Science Trilogy' course (five periods a week plus one tutor period) culminating in exams at the end of Year 11.

The different opportunities at GCSE are designed to best suit pupils' interests, aptitudes and further study/career aspirations.

Technology

Ballard School's technology curriculum is centred on Computer Science, Design Technology and Food Preparation and Nutrition, all of which are taught at GCSE level. STEM activities feature developing 'real world' experiences and problem-solving abilities.

Pupils of all ages are taught how to use information and communication technology safely and develop problem-solving skills. These skills are refined through practice across a wide range of subjects.

Computer Science

IT skills are developed from an early age with a dedicated lesson in Key Stage 2 and 3. Pupils can choose Computer Science GCSE or ICT iGCSE at Key Stage 4.

Problem-solving and thinking skills are developed as a key part of the courses throughout the School, and good IT habits are taught; from file management and internet safety to use of all the key Office applications.

Design Technology (DT)

Design Technology enables pupils to develop their design talents and problem-solving skills. They have the opportunity to work with tools, equipment, materials, and components to produce individual products reflecting their interests and personalities. Pupils use the iterative design process to devise innovative solutions to contexts and briefs, many of which are often open-ended. Design sketching, modelling, prototyping, and testing are often used by pupils to help develop meaningful solutions. Pupils also study and evaluate the way in which designers and consumers interact with products and the world around us. ICT is incorporated into the teaching of both Design Technology and Food Preparation and Nutrition at various stages in the project process. In Design Technology this is in the form of computer aided design and manufacturing using CAD/CAM.

A new 'Outward Facing' GCSE curriculum has been designed to highlight commercial aspects of the subject. This course has been further developed and pupils now study AQA Art and Design – 3-Dimensional Product Design with many pupils excelling in their portfolio and examination assessments.

STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Activities; the DT department has a strong and successful history of participating in major design and building projects within timetabled lessons and co-curricular activities.

Food Preparation and Nutrition

Food Preparation and Nutrition enables pupils to develop their creative, organisation and analytical skills and talents. They have an opportunity to learn a variety of different skills and techniques to produce delicious dishes.

Food Preparation and Nutrition teaches pupils about the composition of food, why we need it, the choices people make and how it affects our long-term health. Pupils will understand how food can be prepared and cooked skilfully and safely to produce delicious and nutritious meals, including foods from different cultures, and how consumers can be informed and thoughtful.

The department works with the Science and Maths departments to stimulate and co-ordinate STEM projects and activities and has links with the British Science Association and Crest Awards Scheme, with pupils gaining a number of Bronze and Silver Awards.

4. Human and Social

Through the teaching principally of Geography, History, Business Studies, and Religious Studies Ballard pupils focus on people and their environment, and look at how human action has influenced, and can influence, events and conditions in both the past and present. These subjects help to develop not just knowledge but also essential skills such as critical thinking and analysis, teamwork, creativity, and written and oral communication. From Years R to 9 pupils receive one Religious Studies lesson per week. Pupils then can choose Religious Studies as a GCSE option if they wish to pursue the subject further.

From Years R – 5, both History and Geography are delivered as part of the Humanities Curriculum in Pre-Prep and Lower Prep.

Once pupils begin Upper Prep in Year 6, they will receive separate lessons of History and Geography until the end of Year 9 when they need to choose these as one of their GCSE Options if they wish to continue with the subject.

Business Studies is taught as a GCSE option only.

Religious Education

Christian values play a key part at Ballard and the Religious Studies and PSHE programmes of study provide pupils a greater understanding of other faiths. Ballard is committed to the undertaking of charitable work and celebration of key Christian events throughout the year. Further details of activities linked to Religious Education and Charity can be found in Ballard's Co-Curricular Policy.

5. Physical

Our commitment to Sport for All, empowers pupils to be the best they can be now and for the future, supporting their wellbeing and fostering a sense of belonging to educate, inspire and share their journey in realising their own potential.

This curriculum ethos starts in Nursey with specialist dance, PE, and gymnastics and progresses throughout the school years to tailored fixtures and a breadth of physical activity and sport so that every pupil has the opportunity to represent the school and their house, whatever their ability. Outstanding opportunities allow pupils to find their passion and showcase their individual talents in a range of activities from Football and Hockey to Paddleboarding and Mountain Biking.

With fantastic facilities and talented teachers, the vision of Ballard Sport is for a rich and child-centred programme, educating pupils through PE - rather than just simply teaching sport.

6. Aesthetic and Creative

The majority of subjects taught at Ballard School can contribute to the aesthetic and creative talents within the individual. However, through the teaching of Art, Music, Dance, Expressive Arts (Years 3 to 5), Drama and English Literature, and a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities including productions, trips and workshops, Ballard pupils enjoy particularly enriching aesthetic and creative opportunities.

Curriculum lessons are delivered by specialist staff in these subjects at all stages of the School. Art and Music are weekly timetabled lessons throughout the school up to Year 9. Dance is delivered through the PE and Expressive Arts curriculum and Drama through Expressive Arts and English up to Year 8. At Year 9, all pupils may opt to partake in a 'Carousel' of these subjects enabling them to make a confident start to their chosen GCSE subjects without sacrificing their broader artistic education. Uptake at GCSE level in Creative subjects is excellent. Pre-Prep pupils also benefit from specialist Music, Dance and Expressive Arts lessons.

Our curriculum provision ensures that all pupils can experience the benefits of a wide range of aesthetic and creative opportunities including workshops, visiting artists, productions and concerts, and trips to galleries and shows.