

## Teaching and Learning Policy

### Glossary

EAL	English as an Additional Language
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator

### Guiding Principles

Our Teaching and Learning Policy aims to promote reflection on, and sharing of, good practice, providing coherence of approach and consistency of expectation combined with flexibility and scope for creativity, so that all students are happy, secure, confident and stimulated to achieve their full potential. All students have the opportunity to learn and make progress.

We recognise that all students have special skills, abilities and aptitudes. All are entitled to a broad, challenging and appropriate curriculum, regardless of ethnicity, gender, specific learning difficulty or disability or medical condition. Learners should not be subject to discrimination, intentional or otherwise, on those grounds or on the grounds of cultural beliefs, religion, sexual orientation or social circumstances.

We seek to foster a love of learning by nurturing self-motivation, to create progressively self-directed learners, whose thinking is critical and creative, robust and flexible. We recognise that the quality of communication between teacher and learner is essential for effective learning: we seek to inspire, to challenge and to praise, so that dialogue can thrive, self-confidence, resilience and respect for others underpin all interaction, achievement can be celebrated and error welcomed as a stepping stone to success.

Students who are identified as having special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language are supported appropriately by their teachers, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), the Inclusion Specialist, or the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Co-ordinator.

As a highly successful school with an international reputation, the Stephen Perse Foundation attracts and retains teaching staff of the very highest calibre. Our programme of in-service training and continuing professional development ensures that our teachers remain at the forefront of their respective fields.

We believe that successful teaching and learning are characterised by:

- Lessons presented with clarity and pace, which take account of students' prior learning
- The belief that the learner can succeed, providing motivation and aspiration
- A sense of purpose to the learning and passion for the subject, communicated to the students
- A good use of available resources, with embedded use of IT

- Opportunities for participation in focused discussions in groups of various sizes, from pair to plenary, which encourage students to express their thinking and use their initiative
- Planning which enables progression, takes account of differentiation, and also builds in the flexibility to respond to the fortuitous and to learning needs.
- Skilful questioning which promotes active listening, reflection and higher order thinking skills.
- The provision of useful feedback given in a variety of ways, including immediate verbal feedback; self-assessment; peer assessment; written formative assessment providing clear advice and encouragement.
- Thinking which is positively critical: that is, questioning, investigating, being imaginative and exploring the boundaries of the possible, making links and applying skills to unfamiliar situations.
- An understanding of how learning takes place: a structure to the lesson which enables students to construct their knowledge and understanding of a subject, skill or values, and to review and recall it for retention.

### **Curriculum Management**

The Curriculum is led by the Director of Studies and the Heads of Pre-prep, Junior School and Dame Bradbury's. Curriculum Leaders (Senior School and Sixth Form College) and Subject Co-ordinators (Pre-prep, Junior School and Dame Bradbury's) manage the teaching and learning within each subject.

### **Teaching groups**

Teaching and learning takes place through a combination of parallel and differentiated groupings.

### **Pre-Prep/Prep/Junior**

At the Stephen Perse Foundation for ages 3-11 the majority of the teaching and learning takes place within forms (usually two per year group). This starts from 12 pupils in the Kindergarten, to 18 in KS1, up to a maximum of 24 pupils in KS2 (20 pupils at Dame Bradbury's).

In all the Pre-Prep schools, the Class Teachers deliver the majority of the curriculum while specialist teachers deliver Music from Kindergarten to Year 2 and French for Year 1 and 2. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework is followed in the EYFS.

The Class Teachers deliver most subjects in the Junior School while specialists deliver Science, Drama and Spanish from Year 4, and Art and Design Engineering from Year 5. French, Music and Sport are taught by specialists across all four year groups. The teaching of IT, which includes E-safety and

Coding, is delivered as a discrete subject in all year groups and is also embedded across the curriculum. PSHEE is delivered by Class Teachers, Form Tutors or the relevant Year Team. Thinking Skills and P4C are embedded across the curriculum for all year groups and Outdoor Learning, based on Forest School principles, is delivered to Years 3-5.

Junior School pupils are taught in both co-educational and single gender classes. All classes are co-educational in Years 3 and 4, except in Sport. In Year 5 approximately half of the timetable is taught in co-educational classes and the remainder is taught in single gender classes. This arrangement is known as the Diamond approach. Currently all Year 6 classes are girls' only; from September 2017 the Diamond arrangement will be implemented in Years 5 and 6.

At Dame Bradbury's specialist teachers deliver Maths in Years 5 and 6, Science, Art and DT from Year 4, French, Music, Spanish and PE across all year groups. Other subjects are delivered mainly by Form Tutors. IT skills, including coding, and programming (digital learning) are delivered throughout the curriculum. PSHEE and Thinking Skills are delivered by Form Tutors or by the subject leader.

Across the 3-11 schools we recognise that pupils have different learning styles and respond in varying ways to different teaching styles. The teachers work hard to be versatile and responsive to the differing needs of all pupils in each class and their aim is to help them to become independent learners who can adapt to a variety of teaching styles.

Differentiation is integral to all teaching and at times it proves beneficial to teach in groups or occasionally sets in order to cater for the varying needs of the pupils and to ensure an appropriate pace of work is provided for all pupils. This may be informally arranged by Class Teachers, such as spelling groups, or more formally arranged, such as for the teaching of Phonics in the Pre-Prep and for the teaching of Maths in Year 6 at the Junior School.

Concerns about teaching and learning should be addressed in the first instance to the Class or Subject Teacher concerned.

In the Junior School and Dame Bradbury's a move from one teaching group to another can be approved only by the Head of School on educational or pastoral grounds, in consultation with the teaching staff concerned. Considerable care is given by teaching staff to placing pupils in the group or set which will best promote their learning and provide the support or the additional stretch or challenge required. Pupils who are identified as having special educational needs or English language needs are supported appropriately by their Class/Subject Teachers under the supervision of the Inclusion Specialist.

## Senior School/Sixth Form College

In Year 7 students are taught in forms, or sub-groups based on forms, for all subjects except Mathematics, where divisions may be made to ensure an appropriate pace of work for every student. In Year 8, the arrangements, as far as possible, are identical to those in Year 7 though students may also be placed in ability groups for Latin. In Year 9, students are taught in option blocks in Languages, according to the Languages they have chosen, and the creative and performing arts are taught in groups in a carousel based on modules chosen. In Years 10 and 11, students are taught in parallel groupings (based on forms or otherwise) for English and in sets for Mathematics. Students may opt to follow the Coordinated Science (leading to two IGCSE grades in the three sciences) rather than the three separate IGCSE courses. For other subjects, girls are taught in groups according to the combination of optional subjects studied. Wherever possible, continuity of teaching is maintained from Year 10 into Year 11, though this cannot be guaranteed.

In the Sixth Form, all subjects are taught in option blocks. The maximum group size for a class is 15 students under normal circumstances. Where a teaching group is very small, the allocation of teaching time may be adjusted downwards (typically to 5 or 6 periods per week instead of the normal 7 periods for an A Level subject). In some subjects, such as Modern Languages, Music (Pre-U) and Art, A Level and IB students may be co-taught in groups.

Concerns about teaching and learning should be addressed in the first instance to the Curriculum Leader for the relevant subject. A move from one teaching group to another can only be approved by the Director of Studies or Head of School on educational or pastoral grounds, based on consultation. Considerable care is taken by teaching staff in placing students in the correct set in order to promote their learning and to provide the support or the additional stretch and challenge required. A move from one set to another is only made following careful deliberation by members of the department and with the approval of the Curriculum Leader and Director of Studies or Head of School. We recognise that students have different learning styles and respond in varying ways to different teaching styles. Our teachers work hard to be versatile and responsive to the differing needs of the students in the class but no teacher can be all things to all students. Our aim, through our interactions in the classroom and through our PSHE and pastoral programme, is to help students to become independent learners who know their own learning profile well and can adapt to a variety of teaching styles. Where there is a perceived incongruity of style or personality between teacher and student, we work to develop strategies for both to make the relationship more effective.

Requests to drop a subject (eg. at GCSE or A Level) or to change subjects should be made by parents in writing to the Head of School. Changes will be considered on a case-by-case basis and within the constraints of the timetable. Changes to a student's curriculum will only be carried out following full consultation with teaching staff concerned and with the Curriculum Leader and Director of Studies. The Head of School will be informed at all stages of the decision so that

pastoral context can be considered. It will not, under normal circumstances, be possible to change from one subject to another after the half-term break of the Autumn Term.

### **Related policies and documents**

The Teaching and Learning Policy is underpinned by the expectation of good behaviour on the part of our students (please refer to the Behaviour and Discipline Policy and the Code of Conduct for each school). It is rare that bad behaviour in the classroom impedes learning.

Please refer additionally to:

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulties Policy
- Technology Acceptable Use Policy
- Curriculum Policy

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