



ALDENHAM SCHOOL

CURRICULUM POLICY

**Reviewed February 2023
by Deputy Head Academic (PJR)**

The Framework

Curriculum Time

In designing the School day we have deliberately designed a structure that ensures that the majority of lessons were in the morning, that it was not over long but still retained sufficient time for the teaching curriculum. Many day pupils travel a long way and a long teaching day was felt to be unproductive. Similarly, terms are intense and busy and lengthening them reduces effectiveness.

Lesson Length

In deciding lesson length there needs to be a compromise between having lessons long enough for good teaching time and yet still allow frequent contact with the pupils. The length of lesson is also important to ensure that there was sufficient flexibility in the week. There we operate 45 minute lessons with a 5 minute travelling time as the optimum length balancing the needs for length and flexibility.

Timings of the day

It is important to ensure that every session of the day, particularly periods 1, 4, and 6 starts punctually. Staff are expected to set an example and address pupil tardiness.

General Principles of the Curriculum

Core and Compulsory elements

Mathematics	for essential numeracy skills
English	for essential communication skills
Science	to provide understanding of world around
MFL (Years 7-9)	to enable communication and understanding of other cultures
PRE	to provide an ethical and philosophical framework.
Life Matters	to provide PSHE
PE and Games	for essential physical fitness

The curriculum is composed of elements which are a pragmatic necessity for life in the 21st century (Core Subjects) as well as elements which allow pupils to explore the nature of humanity and creativity and so arrive at a more rounded understanding of the world and what it means to live responsibly in it. Alongside the Core the options provide further opportunities for the Humanities (Classical Civilisation, Latin, Geography, History and Religious Studies), as well as for Appreciation and Creativity (Art, Computer Science and Design & Technology) and Performance (Drama, Music and PE). Finally, explicit Life Matters lessons for the delivery of a more structured PSHE programme. For some pupils, because of LDD or SEN, this provision is too demanding. In such instances the pupil, their record and needs are taken into consideration to plan a suitable curriculum. For example, in a few cases boys and girls who have dyslexia may not do a foreign language. Instead they might have an organised learning support class or individual tuition to meet their specific needs during this timetabled block.

The crucial curriculum design is KS4. KS5 follows on from this and the shape of KS3 one is dictated by the desire to provide a broad base and for what is necessary for the KS4 study programme.

KS4 Curriculum

Core Compulsory Elements over two weeks

Mathematics	8 periods
English	9 periods
Science	15 periods (3x5)
PE,	1 period
Games	4 periods
Life Matters	1 period

Within these core subjects the possibility exists for entries in more than 1 subject depending on the set and their ability. For example, in English all pupils will do the Language exam and most pupils will also do the Literature exam. In Mathematics most of set 1 will do Further maths. In Science the top sets will do the triple award and the lower sets double award Science. In addition, all pupils attend 1 Life Matters lesson in the two-week cycle for PSHE education.

Options (over 2 weeks) 4 blocks 28 periods (4x7)

Rules for selection:	4 choices
Suggested:	1 Modern Foreign Language 1 from “Creative” or “Performance” (Art (Fine Art), Art (Textiles), Drama, Design Technology, PE, Music, Computer Science) 1 from “Humanities” (Classical Civilisation, Geography, History, PRE)
1 Further free choice	from the above lists and including Latin

KS3 Curriculum

This must provide a proper foundation for the study of subjects at KS4. It must also provide sufficient opportunity for exposure to a wide range of subjects so they can make an informed choice about their subjects alter on. Therefore, all subjects of the KS4 curriculum should be represented to some extent. However, in view of the increased rigour of the GCSEs and to provide more choice some options are introduced in Year 8 and 9. In Year 8, pupils can choose to study Latin as an option against Design Technology. In Year 9 pupils may continue to choose between Latin and DT but can also now make a choice between Music and Classical Civilisation. All pupils joining the School in Year 7 study both French and Spanish before committing to one language in Year 8, which we encourage them to continue through to Year 11. Pupils also have Life Matters lessons once a cycle to provide appropriate PSHE education.

The number of periods per subject over a 2-week cycle in KS3 is as follows:

Games	8 periods
Mathematics	8 periods
English	8 periods in Year 7, 7 periods in Year 8 & 8 periods in Year 9
Science	12 periods (3x4)
MFL	5 periods in Year 7, 7 periods in Year 8 & 7 periods in Year 9
Art	4 periods in Year 7, 4 periods in Year 8 & 3 periods in Year 9
Design Technology	3 periods in Year 7. 4 periods in Year 8 & 9
Computer Science, Geography, History, Music, PRE	3 periods each

PE, Drama, Latin
Life Matters

2 periods (Latin 4 periods in Year 8 and 9)
1 period

KS5 Curriculum

This follows on from the KS4 curriculum allowing a choice of 4 subjects initially. Most will discontinue one subject after the first half term, although a few may continue with 4. Some of those taking 3 may choose to take an additional course like the EPQ or Subsidiary Maths which will continue into Year 13. As well as their 4 main courses pupils attend Careers lessons, a Skills programme and Life matters lessons aimed at improving independent learning. Pupils who need to gain a passing grade GCSE in English or Mathematics will be prepared for retaking these exams.

Curriculum Plan

	SUBJECT																	
Year 7 Subject	GA	MA	EN	BI	CH	PH	LM	PE	AR	CS	DR	DT	GE	HI	LA	MFL	MU	PRE
Lessons/cycle	8	8	8	4	4	4	1	2	4	3	2	3	3	3	2	5	3	3
Classes/Sets 2019/20	7	5	5	5	5	5	5	7	5	5	5	8	5	5	5	5	5	5
Year 8 Subject	GA	MA	EN	BI	CH	PH	LM	PE	AR	CS	DR	DT/LA	GE	HI		MFL	MU	PRE
Lessons/cycle	8	8	7	4	4	4	1	2	4	3	2	4	3	3		7	3	3
Classes/Sets 2019/20	7	4	4	4	4	4	4	6	4	4	4	6-2	4	4		5	4	4
Year 9 Subject	GA	MA	EN	BI	CH	PH	LM	PE	AR	CS	DR	DT/LA	GE	HI		MFL	MU/CC	PRE
Lessons/cycle	8	8	8	4	4	4	1	2	3	3	2	4	3	3		7	3	3
Classes/Sets 2019/20	11	6	5	5	5	5	5	7	5	5	5	6-1	5	5		5	2-3	5
Year 10 Subject	GA	MA	EN	BI	CH	PH	LM	PE	OPTIONS x 4									
Lessons/cycle	8	8	9	5	5	5	1	1	28									
Classes/Sets 2019/20	9	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	As required by option choices									
Year 11 Subject	GA	MA	EN	BI	CH	PH	LM	PE	OPTIONS x 4									
Lessons/cycle	8	8	9	5	5	5	1	1	28									
Classes/Sets 2019/20	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	As required by option choices									
Year 12 Subject	GA	CA	PVS						OPTIONS x 3									
Lessons/cycle	8	2	10						42									
Classes/Sets 2019/20	7	1	40						As required by option choices									
Year 13 Subject	GA								OPTIONS x 3									
Lessons/cycle	8								42									
Classes/Sets 2019/20	6								As required by option choices									

Banding and Setting

In Year 7 and 8 all teaching classes are mixed ability with the exception of mathematics which is setted. In Year 8 pupils are also set for their chosen MFL.

From Year 9 onwards Maths, English, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, MFL, Classical Civilisation and Music are all setted.

Pastoral considerations may be included when constructing sets and these may include the number of girls in the class, previous friendship groups and feeder school advice.

Setting is carried out in certain core subjects at various points in KS3 and KS4. This is based on more specific subject based evidence. Setting may change following testing or internal exams. The amount of movement between sets tends to decrease as public exams approach.

Stretch and challenge, EAL and SEN

Information about pupils is drawn from a number of sources to identify pupils who may have specific learning needs. These sources will include interview, baseline assessments, previous school or specialist reports and family. Once here pupils, if not already identified, may be identified through baseline assessments, other School testing, entrant screening and teacher referral. A suitable programme of SEN support may be put in place where the SEN department considers it appropriate and reasonable for mainstream school setting.

Pupils who have a specific learning need or significant outside School commitment may take a reduced or more directed range of subjects as agreed by the DHA. Pupils from overseas may take an English qualification as well as doing appropriate qualifications in their mother tongue. This may necessitate specific preparation for oral exams as an extra.

Stretching our more able pupils is achieved primarily through setting and streaming and by classroom delivery of extension work and activities but may involve extra-curricular activities or further opportunities in the area of talent. It will also be provided by differentiated activities during lessons.

PSHE

Students receive PSHE from a variety of sources. Some is subsumed within academic subjects where topics within these subjects provide opportunity for debate and reflection. Major themes are often dealt with through presentations that might be for whole or part of a day using the resources of an outside agency. These can then be used as an impetus for further discussion and action within the dedicated tutor time in Martineau's or Life Matters programme for Years 7-11. The Life Matters programme is taught by specific teachers and not by academic tutors.

Careers Guidance

Aldenham employs a careers adviser to deliver careers education to all pupils from Year 7 upwards. This takes place as part of the Life Matters syllabus and in the tutorial programme.

In terms of careers planning, choices at GCSE and A Level are important and require careful consideration. Pupils receive advice from a variety of sources on what subjects to take at each stage. Some of these sources are more expert and informed than others. An agreed pattern of subject choices is arrived at by conversation with tutor, teachers, pupil and parents. Housemasters, Head of UCAS, and the Deputy Head (Academic) are also involved in these discussions as appropriate.

In Year 12 pupils attend a course of lectures on various forms of employment in the professions and services and are encouraged to arrange work experience placements during the Summer holidays. The careers adviser will support and guide pupils in this endeavour and provide contacts wherever possible. Towards the end of Year 12 the pupils begin the UCAS process, receiving guidance from many different sources.

Prep

Prep is an important part of the educational programme for the pupils. Despite the large number of subjects studied in Years 7 & 8 the number of preps is limited to between to around 2 per night of relatively modest length. In KS4, longer preps are used in line with the more specific subject focus. When more than 1 prep is set a week, a written task should be set for at least one which can then be marked and feedback given to pupils. In 2022/23 the prep pattern looks as follows over a two-week cycle:

Year 7 Subject	Number of preps – 30 mins. duration	Year 8 Subject	Number of preps - 30 mins. duration	Year 9 Subject	Number of preps - 30/45 mins. duration	
Ma	2-4	Ma	2-4	Ma	4	
En	2	En	2	En	2	
Bi	1	Bi	1	Bi	1	
Ch	1	Ch	1	Ch	1	
Ph	1	Ph	1	Ph	1	
Pe	0	Pe	0	Pe	0	
CS	1	CS	1	CS (La)	1	
Ga	0	Ga	0	Ga	0	
PRE	1	PRE	1	PRE	2	
MFL	1	MFL	1	MFL	2	
Latin	0					
Ge	1	Ge	1	Ge	1	
Hi	1	Hi	1	Hi	1	
Dr	0	Dr	0	Dr	0	
DT	1	DT(La)	1/2	DT (La)	1/2	
Mu	1	Mu	1	Mu	1	
LM	0	LM	0	LM	0	
Ar	1	Ar	1	Ar	1	
Total	17		17	Total	19	
	Year 10 Subjects	Number of preps of 40 mins duration		Year 11 Subjects	Number of preps of 40 mins duration	
	Ma	4		Ma	4	
	En	4		En	4	
	Bi	2		Bi	2	
	Ch	2		Ch	2	
	Ph	2		Ph	2	
	Ga	0		Ga	0	
	PE/LM/PRE	0		PE/LM/PRE	0	
	Block 1	2		Block 1	2	
	Block 2	2		Block 2	2	
	Block 3	2		Block 3	2	
	Block 4	2		Block 4	2	
	Total	22		Total	22	

Shape of Week

The shape of the week is designed to get the best from pupils. Most lessons are concentrated in the morning. Most days have 7 lessons with Mondays having 6 lessons and Tutor Time.

In Years 9-13 Wednesdays have 8 lessons and in Years 7-8 Thursdays have 8 lessons. Apart from these most afternoons have 2 lessons and then some other activity, either games or activities. On Monday & Friday the School finishes early after assembly (Monday) or Chapel service (Friday).

Pastoral

There is a need for quality contact time for Houses with pupils. To facilitate this, the PSHE programme will be dealt with via the Life Matters lessons and on subject specific days for particular year groups. These may then be followed up by support activities in the dedicated Tutor periods.

Extra-Curricular

The Co-curricular programme is an essential element of the provision for pupils. Proper time is given over to these activities within the School week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.

Games are equally important. Tuesday and Saturday fixtures happen for the Senior School with timetabled games sessions at other times for year groups. In Martineau's there are Wednesday fixtures and Friday fixtures.

Some Music activities take place in lunchtimes. A full choir rehearsal happens on Tuesday afternoon. Instrumental music and Lambda Lessons are 40 minutes and therefore run across lesson timings.

Departmental detentions take place in lunchtime.

As well as a rich and diverse activities programme pupils take part in a varied programme of events. House rivalry provides a powerful spur for Music, Drama, and Debating as well as sporting competition.