



THE
PORTSMOUTH
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL

The PGS Curriculum Policy

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The PGS Curriculum Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Portsmouth Grammar School is committed to providing a rigorous academic and intellectual education which will inspire, challenge and engage pupils, offer continuity and progression of learning to foster a life-long love of learning for its own sake and provide them with a secure foundation on which to continue into Higher Education and/or into the careers of their choice.
- 1.2. All pupils, including those with Additional Educational Needs and Disabilities (AEN), on Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and those who are on the More Able, Gifted and Talented (MAGT) register, have opportunities to learn and make progress according to their age, needs and aptitudes. The School's curriculum fulfils the DfE requirements for the Quality of Education provided, i.e.
 - 1.2.1. full-time, supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age, which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 1.2.2. subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with a statement;
 - 1.2.3. pupils acquire skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy;
 - 1.2.4. personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), known as Pastoral Curriculum at The Portsmouth Grammar School, which reflects the School's aims and ethos;
 - 1.2.5. appropriate careers guidance;
 - 1.2.6. where the School has pupils above or below compulsory school age:
 - (a) a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
 - (b) all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress;
 - (c) adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in Britain through the active promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

2. Curriculum structure

- 2.1. In Reception and Pre-School, the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is followed and has regard to the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2015) in respect of funded early years provision. Reception and pupils in Years 1&2 (Infants) are largely classroom-based working under the care and guidance of a Form Teacher.
- 2.2. Throughout the Infants, English and Mathematics are taught daily. Other subjects include Art, History, Geography, Design Technology, Computing, Science and PSHE via the Thematic Curriculum to develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding. PE, Music, French and PRS are taught as discrete subjects with specialist teachers providing these aspects within the curriculum. Children in the Infants receive 24 hours of lessons a week which include time for one-to-one reading, phonics, stories and pastoral matters.
- 2.3. In Juniors (Years 3-6), children gradually become more independent, moving from their form rooms for some lessons and encountering specialist subject teachers. English and Mathematics are taught across 9 lessons each fortnight, alongside daily 'key skills' sessions. Pupils also receive weekly lessons in Science, History, Geography, Computing, PRS, PSHE, French (German and Spanish in Year 6), Art, and Design Technology. Pupils participate in two games lessons and one PE lesson each week, and are encouraged to participate in a sports session every Saturday morning. Dance, Drama and Music combine for two Performing Arts sessions every week. As in the Infants there is an emphasis on developing cross-curricular skills, knowledge and understanding via the Thematic Curriculum. Children in the Juniors have 29 hours of lessons a week, including reading and pastoral matters.
- 2.4. For Years 7-11, the core curriculum of subjects provides the opportunity for pupils to continue to develop skills in speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. These are further developed in their other subjects. Pupils are taught 60 periods per fortnight. Most are single periods of 50 minutes; some (in Year 10 and 11 practical subjects, where the timetable allows this) are double periods of 1 hour and 45 minutes. Pupils will have 25 hours of lessons a week.
- 2.5. In Years 7 and 8, all pupils receive a broad introductory curriculum which gives them experience in all of the aspects outlined above. Thereafter an element of choice is introduced to enable pupils to explore those subjects more fully for which they have an enthusiasm and/or aptitude. Specific details of the subjects studied follow.

3. The Middle School - Years 7 and 8

- 3.1. All pupils study Maths, English, Geography, History, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Computing, Latin, Drama, Music, PE, Art, and Design and Technology. Pupils in Year 7 study one Modern Language, from French, Spanish and German. Wherever possible, pupils are given a free choice of language. Science is split with lessons in Biology and in Physical Science, a PGS-designed syllabus looking at the Physical Sciences in context.
- 3.2. In Year 7, pupils also study The Portsmouth Curriculum for one lesson a fortnight, focusing on local matters relating to history, literature, geography and archaeology, as well as general skills of citizenship, thinking, life-skills and research. [This includes visits to local places of interest such as John Pounds and the Cathedral, refining their sales skills and examining the unique geography of our coast.](#)

4. Years 9, 10 and 11

- 4.1. For Years 9-11, whilst virtually all pupils study a core curriculum of Mathematics, English, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and a Modern Language until the end of Key Stage 4, there is also the opportunity for them to build around that a combination of other optional subjects. Quite deliberately, the school chooses each year to construct timetables for Years 9, 10 and 11 around pupils' choices, and not the other way around. Thus, there are no predetermined "Option Bands".
- 4.2. The school aims to run any course in which there is sufficient demand. Specific details of the subjects studied follow.
- 4.3. Year 9

In Year 9 all pupils continue to study the core curriculum of Maths, English, Philosophy and Religious Studies, PE, Geography, History, and a Modern Language. Science is taught separately as Biology, Chemistry and Physics, compulsory for all. Pupils also make a choice of three options from: Latin (*or* Latin and Greek), Drama, Computing, Music, Art, Design and Technology, Food and Nutrition, Money Management, and a second Modern Language.

4.4. Years 10 and 11

Pupils continue with the core subjects of Mathematics, English, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and a Modern Language. Pupils also make a choice of three options from: Geography, History (GCSE or IGCSE), Latin (*or* Latin and Greek), Classical Civilisation, Drama, Computing, Music, Art, Design and Technology, Food and Nutrition, Physical Education, Business Studies, a second Modern Language and Philosophy and Religious Studies. All pupils continue with core PE lessons, and may, in addition, select PE as a GCSE subject.

4.5. Years 12 and 13

- 4.5.1. At Sixth Form, a similar policy applies to pupils' choice of A Level as with **options in** Years 9, 10 and 11. The school aims to run any course in which numbers are economically viable. A Level courses run over a two-year period and results are aggregated at the end of the course. Advice is given to all students regarding their Sixth Form choices and this advice includes an interview with each Year 11 pupil by the Head and with a member of the pastoral team. The A Level curriculum of examination subjects is supplemented by an innovative academic enrichment course, "Ignite!" for Year 12, which is non-examined and has numerous contributions from non-teaching specialists in their own field. Pupils are encouraged to develop the skills needed for successful study at university. An important aspect of this preparation is their completion of a research project: Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) or 'PGS Extend'. PGS Extend is an internally-assessed extended project which may result in an essay, novel or a practical piece, such as a sculpture. The majority of Year 12 now choose to select the EPQ route. Pupils also take part in timetabled voluntary work, called Community, Action and Workplace (CAW) at PGS, and Games lessons on a weekly basis.
- 4.5.2. Pupils have the option to take 3 or 4 A Levels, although the few pupils who choose the latter will not take part in the Ignite! programme. Currently we offer courses in: Art and Design, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Classical Civilisation, Computer Science, Design Technology, Economics, English Literature, French, Geography, German, Government and Politics, Greek, History, Latin, Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Music, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Physical Education, Physics, Psychology, Spanish and Theatre Studies. In many subjects there is non-examination assessment (NEA) and as all A Levels have now been reformed, there is an assessment period in the Summer of Year 13 at the end of the two-year course.
- 4.5.3. In the Sixth Form, as at other stages of school life, the range of subjects on offer is affected by the number of pupils opting for them, and the school may not run a particular subject if the group size is not viable. However, such cases are very rare.
- 4.5.4. The Ignite! programme allows A Level pupils to select from a wide range of short academic enrichment courses designed to allow them to become deep-thinkers, critical enquirers and intellectual risk-takers. The programme offers the opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills independently and outside of the A Level syllabus. These range from academic enrichment courses in humanities, arts, languages, tech and science (e.g. Sustainability, Criminology, Politics and Culture, British Sign Language, How to Win at Arguments, Medical Ethics,, Architecture) to personal enrichment (e.g. Climbing, Yoga, Food for Thought, Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, Film School, Finances for over-18s). Pupils also engage with enriching the lives of others by taking part in voluntary work in the community, which is embedded into the timetable. Pupils also follow the PGS Extend or EPQ programme, a longer project-learning exercise which allows them to explore a super-curricular area of interest prior to making a UCAS application.

- 4.5.5. Sixth Form pupils have provision for Private Study which includes use of the Sixth Form Centre library, the Memorial Library, the Careers Library, the Project Room, Computer Rooms (with the permission of staff) and specialist areas (with the permission of the appropriate Head of Department). In some cases, the Head of Sixth Form or Sixth Form Team may insist that a pupil attend Supervised Private Study in the Memorial Library.

5. Further Details

Further details of the curriculum, including time allocated to each subject, can be found in the Middle School and Upper School curriculum information booklets and the Sixth Form course guide.

6. The Pastoral Curriculum/PSHE

- 6.1. The Pastoral Curriculum constitutes the personal, social, health and economic education delivered to all pupils and reflects the school's aims and ethos. At its core it encourages respect for other people and a culture of tolerance with particular regard to the protected characteristics established in the Equality Act 2010 and as such, it actively prepares pupils for life in British society and the wider international community.
- 6.2. In the Junior School, PSHE is delivered by Teachers on a weekly basis via discrete lessons and assemblies and also across our provision via our Thematic Curriculum and Learning Tree. The PSHE co-ordinator(s) liaises with other subject leads to ensure a full programme is delivered. Visitors and special days complement the provision.
- 6.3. In Years 7-13, the Pastoral Curriculum is delivered, as part of the teaching timetable, in one 50-minute period every fortnight. Teachers with a particular skill or interest in the field are part of the teaching team and these lessons are supplemented by Tutor Group discussion, assemblies, bespoke sessions delivered by specialists and special events with outside speakers. In the Sixth Form the Pastoral Curriculum is delivered through bespoke collapsed days throughout the year alongside lectures and events arranged within the Ignite! programme. A full programme of the Pastoral Curriculum is provided and outlined in the Pastoral Curriculum Handbook. The Head of the Pastoral Curriculum co-ordinates teaching and, together with Heads of House (for Years 9-11) and the Head of the Middle School (for Years 7 and 8), ensures that all areas of the programme are covered. The Pastoral Curriculum is an important element of our Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) provision.

7. Preparation for future life

- 7.1. The school has a clear aim to encourage pupils to think not only about where they will be at 18 but where they aspire to be at 25. As a result, the curriculum aims to support the development of skills and character attributes such as independence and resilience for later life. Development of these skills occurs both within the curriculum and through co-curricular activities. In Year 6, pupils write letters to their future 25-year-old selves which they are invited to read when they return to school for their reunions, at 25. Year 7 pupils are taught thinking skills within their Portsmouth Curriculum lessons; all years attend at least one seminar addressing skills such as time management at key points in the curriculum; pupils in all year groups are encouraged to take part in PGS Extend developing their independent research skills and groups such as Model United Nations and the Debating Society to develop debating skills; Sixth Form pupils develop these skills as part of their timetabled CAW time and in many courses within the Ignite! Programme, as well as being given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, for example working as Maths Ambassadors or leading a subject club, such as the Antiquities Society or the Economics and Business Society

8. Games

- 8.1. The Games programme involves the use of facilities on the main school site, our Hilsea Playing Fields and various other facilities in the city.
- 8.2. In the Junior School, all Juniors have two sessions of Games a week, one in the morning and an afternoon slot. Year 2 children have one full afternoon a week when they do Games.
- 8.3. In the Senior School, each pupil, regardless of age, participates in a full Games programme on one afternoon of the week, or in the case of Year 7 Games, between morning break and lunch.

9. Co-Curriculum

- 9.1. Activities beyond the classroom regularly contribute to the broad and balanced curriculum that is on offer by enhancing and developing pupils' experience.
- 9.2. Clubs and societies are published in the back of the school's termly calendar on SOCS and in the Co-Curricular Booklet. The programme ranges from Amnesty International to Wildlife Club and covering subjects from Art to Electronics. By participating in these activities, pupils are helped by the school to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence. Middle School tutors undertake a termly pastoral and co-curricular review for all Year 7 and 8 pupils to ensure that they are doing neither too much nor too little.

10. Academic Enrichment

- 10.1. These activities aim to extend pupils' knowledge, interest and ability and promote academic endeavour beyond the classroom. They include participating in internal, local and national competitions, challenge days, visits, lectures and other events.
- 10.2. Annual events include entries in the Junior, Intermediate and Senior team and individual Mathematics Challenge competition, the Biology Challenge competition and the British Olympiad awards for Maths, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Pupils participate in the internal Lockheed Martin Engineering day, the Engineering Education Scheme, Crest awards, the BAE Boat building challenge and Smallpiece trust events. The English department run an annual visit to Chawton House, enter pupils for national essay prizes, invite authors in for collapsed timetable days and compete in the Kids' Lit Quiz. Pupils participate in the Linguistics Olympiad and compete in the Classical Languages reading competition. In Business and Economics pupils compete in the Royal Economics Society Essay Competition and support the running of the PGS Institute of Economic Affairs Conference. Entrepreneurs test their skills with the Faith and Football Charity. In Computing, Year 8 – 10 pupils compete in the national Perse Challenge and Bebras Computational Thinking Competition, the IBM Bright Sparks competition and the TCS Oxford Computing Challenge.

11. Careers

- 11.1. The Careers, Universities & Scholarship Department provides comprehensive support and impartial, accurate and up-to-date advice regarding career choices to all pupils from Years 7 to 13. This guidance:
- 11.1.1. is presented in an impartial manner
 - 11.1.2. enables pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options
 - 11.1.3. helps to encourage pupils to fulfil their potential
 - 11.1.4. makes links between academic departments and careers pathways
- 11.2. Year 7 and 8 Careers Days are held each year in the summer term and tutor visits are provided to Year 9 -11 pupils. Much of the Higher Education provision detailed below also integrates Career advice for pupils (including apprenticeships).

12. Higher Education

- 12.1. In-school activities are organised for each year group and additional visits by outside agencies, speakers and advisers, including regular Careers Lunches and an annual Careers Convention. The organisation of work experience for Year 11 pupils is promoted and, through the Morrisby Tests, Year 10 and 12 pupils are assisted in developing a greater awareness of their strengths and of how their interests relate to the world of work.
- 12.2. The Careers, Universities & Scholarship Department begins offering specific guidance regarding the Higher Education application process to pupils from Year 10 upwards. Preparation and guidance regarding Sixth Form choices are additionally provided via, amongst other things, the school's Sixth Form and Beyond Days in the summer of Year 10. A UCAS Day is organised for Year 12 pupils, focused on university application and preparation. There is a rigorous UCAS application support programme managed by the department in partnership with Specialist Subject Advisers, the Sixth Form team, the Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning) and the Deputy Head (Academic & Staff Welfare). This includes: hosting an annual Universities Fair; offering one-to-one advice and review sessions with pupils; organising visits to universities and visits from university representatives; provision of an in-depth PGS UCAS guide to each Year 12 pupil; access to the Morrisby platform which provides resources for researching university choices and other pathways, including apprenticeships; a well-stocked Universities Library with the latest information on institutions and courses; provision of expert CV, personal statement and interview training to all Year 12 pupils; as well as other essential areas of support.

13. Learning Support

- 13.1. The Portsmouth Grammar School is a selective independent day school, educating pupils of average to high-level ability from Pre-School through to Sixth Form. Both the Junior School and the Senior School accept pupils based on their performance in assessment tests and at interview.
- 13.2. The Portsmouth Grammar School fully supports the general principles set out in the Equality Act 2010. It has its own Admissions Policy and Additional Educational Needs (AEN) and Disabilities Policy which are available on the website; the latter policy now incorporates the Reasonable Adjustments Policy.
- 13.3. We aim to enable all pupils who are accepted into the school to have access to the full curriculum, to achieve their academic potential and to ensure that no pupil's progress is held back by any kind of learning difficulty.
- 13.4. We aim to integrate our learning support systems with the curriculum, to aid learning and the acquisition of skills in all subject areas that involve literacy and numeracy.

- 13.5. In practical terms, support is provided by both internal staff and external professionals. Pupils with significant learning difficulties or disabilities are provided with individual education plans. Children with an EHC plan will follow an educational and welfare programme of support devised by the Learning Support department. Support lessons may be provided within the academic timetable or outside it. The need and allocation of support lessons for each pupil are regularly reviewed. A small minority of pupils follow a reduced curriculum based on individual academic and pastoral needs; this provides space in their school week for a higher level of learning support which underpins accessibility of the rest of their curriculum.
- 13.6. Some provision is provided free of extra charge, some at parental expense and this, too, is kept under review. See the PGS Additional Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy for further detail.

14. Guidance and Support

- 14.1. The Portsmouth Grammar Junior School is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum that enables each pupil to achieve their highest potential in academic, sporting, cultural, spiritual and personal development. Pupils' progress is monitored and assessed formally using data from CEM Assessments in Mathematics and Reading at the beginning of each academic year. Staff are expected to ensure that they teach their subject(s) with commitment and enthusiasm and maintain the highest standards at all times. Teaching styles must be appropriate to the ability, age and nature of the pupils. Staff and particularly a pupil's Form Teacher will liaise to ensure that under-achieving pupils are identified and supported at an early stage. This may lead to a referral to Learning Support and the involvement of parents.
- 14.2. In the Senior School, we pride ourselves on our examination success (most pupils will obtain between 9 and 11 GCSEs and 3 or 4 A Levels with high grades) and we recognise the importance of giving as much attention to those who find academic work challenging as to those who are able and gifted. Teachers record in their mark books the academic profile of all pupils as provided by their ALIS or MidYIS scores and whether or not they have an AEN, EAL or are on the MAGT register. Colleagues are expected to develop their lesson plans according to the pupils in each class and monitor their academic performance closely, taking remedial action promptly in the case of those pupils who are at academic risk. Examples of action taken include: setting additional homework, providing supplementary lessons, requiring pupils to re-sit examinations or running pre-examination revision classes. If a particular concern remains, then teachers contact the pupil's tutor who may recommend further support through the use of a personal action plan (PAP) completed weekly in collaboration with the pupil and shared with parents and the pastoral team. All pupils are expected to give of their best and to be encouraged to develop their natural talents to the full according to their ability.
- 14.3. Most subjects are not setted in the Senior School, in order to benefit pupils of all abilities. Pupils are placed in sets from after October half-term in Year 7. Science is taught in sets in Years 10 and 11 only. Teaching pupils in this way can enable teachers to support pupils by providing tasks more closely directed to the ability level of the group. Lower ability sets in Mathematics and the Sciences are smaller, allowing for more individual focus. Pupils requiring greater support in English are, when timetabling allows, taught in a nurture group at Key Stage 4, also allowing for additional support from a teaching assistant. Modern Languages classes have the benefit of language assistant support in all three languages taught at the school.
- 14.4. Very occasionally the decision will be made to allow a pupil to study fewer subjects than normal, usually as a result of an Additional Educational Needs. All such decisions are taken in the best interests of the pupil after consultation with the pupil, parents, Head of Learning Support, Head of Year and Deputy Head (Academic & Staff Welfare).

15. Monitoring

- 15.1. All pupils are graded on their academic attainment and effort every half term in the Senior School and termly in the Junior School. In the Senior School teachers discuss these grades with all pupils before targets are set during grades review at the end of every grading period. In the Senior School, average attainment and effort grades are discussed by tutors and the pastoral team half termly at Pastoral Monitoring Committee meetings and specific action plans, including PAPs, are created for pupils who are deemed not to be making suitable progress. The Assistant Head (Pupil Progress) plays an important role in this process.
- 15.2. All teachers are expected to provide evidence of progress for pupils in their classes, highlighting significant value-added as provided by the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) for those pupils who have taken external exams. This evidence is discussed during their annual appraisal with their Head of Department.

16. Vision

- 16.1. Our curriculum is designed to be true to our vision that The Portsmouth Grammar School is a school in which young people are inspired to learn and develop the confidence to believe in their ability to make a positive difference to the world. By giving pupils sufficient breadth and choice while still promoting academic depth, we aim to meet the School's aims that pupils:
- 16.1.1. are happy and thrive
 - 16.1.2. enjoy learning and pursue success to the best of their ability
 - 16.1.3. are prepared for the changing world beyond school
 - 16.1.4. make an active contribution and live purposeful lives
 - 16.1.5. develop a sense of identity and to be their own person

17. Associated policies and documents

- 17.1. The PGS Additional Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- 17.2. The PGS Teaching and Learning Policy
- 17.3. The PGS Feedback & Assessment Policy
- 17.4. The PGS MAGT Policy
- 17.5. The PGS Pastoral Curriculum Handbook
- 17.6. The PGS Middle School Curriculum Booklet
- 17.7. The PGS Upper School Curriculum Booklet
- 17.8. The PGS Sixth Form Prospectus and Course Guide
- 17.9. The PGS SMSC Statement

18. Allocation of tasks and Version control

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	Deputy Head (Academic)	As required, and at least termly
Monitoring the implementation of the policy, relevant risk assessments and any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness	Deputy Head (Academic)	As required, and at least termly
Maintaining up to date records of all information created in relation to the policy and its implementation as required by the GDPR	Deputy Head (Academic)	As required, and at least termly
Reviewing input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, Parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	Deputy Head (Academic)	As required, and normally annually
Formal review	Governing body	Three yearly

The PGS Curriculum Policy	
Date approved	7 th February 2025 (Education Committee)
Date reviewed	15 th January 2025 (SMT)
Next Review Due	Spring Term 2028 (with update Sept 2025)
Review Schedule	Every 3 Years
Policy Author	Deputy Head (Teaching and Learning)
Status:	ISI Requirement to be made available
Report:	Academic and Educational Report

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