

CARRICKFERGUS COLLEGE

School Curriculum Policy 2008/09

In Carrickfergus College the Curriculum is defined as “the totality of educational experiences and opportunities provided by the College, both within and beyond the classroom.”

This Policy statement:

- Describes an understanding and approach to the curriculum as agreed by the Governors and teaching staff;
- In offering guidelines for staff, parents and pupils, avoids excessive description or prescription;
- Provides a standard from which staff can evaluate their professional contribution and professional development;
- Describes a framework designed to support the development of the curriculum.

Rationale

Governors and Staff believe there is a need to provide a broad, balanced curriculum which aims to meet the physical, social, intellectual, spiritual and emotional needs of individual pupils, as they develop and prepare for further study, citizenship and the world of work. The Governors recognise their responsibility to operate within the parameters of the Education Reform Order 1989, the Education(Curriculum Minimum Content) Order 2007 and the constraints of the delegated budget from the North Eastern Education and Library Board.

Organisation and Content of the Academic Curriculum

Key Stage 3

Pupils are placed in classes with other young people of similar ability. This creates potential for pupils to progress at the right pace, with maximum opportunity for success. Subjects offered at this stage are English, Mathematics, Science, Art, Geography, History, Home Economics, ICT, Music, Physical Education, Religious Education, PSE, Technology, Citizenship, Employability and Enterprise. Most pupils will also study either French or Spanish.

Key Stage 4

All pupils follow courses leading to GCSE. In some subjects, e.g., Modern Languages, some pupils follow alternative courses more suitable for their academic ability.

All pupils study the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, Careers, Religious Education and Physical Education and additional subjects from the

'options' choices. Where possible, pupils are placed in classes with pupils of similar ability. Subjects currently offered include English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, Single and Double Award Science, Business Studies, Religious Education, Physical Education, French, Spanish, Geography, History, Art & Design, Music, Technology, Home Economics, Hospitality, ICT, Child Development, Media Studies and Learning for Life and Work.

Sixth Form

Pupils who achieve the required GCSE grades at 'C' or above have the opportunity to undertake Advanced Level study. The range of courses is reviewed annually in an attempt to accommodate those students who wish to return to school in Year 13. In exceptional circumstances, and based on teacher recommendations, pupils may be admitted to 6th form study with less than the required number of points.

Courses currently available include GCE A levels in Art, Applied Business Studies, History, English Literature, ICT, Health and Social Care, Travel and Tourism and R.E. Key skills in Communication, Application of Number and IT form an integral part of the 6th Form Programme of Study. Various curriculum enrichment courses enhance the 6th form timetable, including Young Enterprise, Welcome Host, Welcome Host Plus, Welcome Europe and COPE. Pupils can also access other subjects offered outside Carrickfergus College through the Carrickfergus Learning Community. These subjects include French, Geography, Music, Photography, Biology, Government and Politics, Media Studies, PE, Moving Image Arts, Maths, Home Economics, Sports Studies and Performing Arts.

In 2007/08 a Distance Learning subject was trialled. The subject is Film Studies and will initially be offered only as an AS subject. Uptake for this new subject will be closely monitored.

Provision for Pupils with Learning Difficulties

- (a) Liaison with Primary Schools at transfer to identify support needs;
- (b) Identification of needs through internal assessment procedures;
- (c) Additional support provided through assistance from SENCo, Assistant SENCo, Classroom Assistants, Literacy Support Staff, and School Support Centre.
- (d) Engage the support of the NEELB Education Psychology Service, as required.
- (e) Appropriately avail of any other support mechanism, which might help meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties.

Teaching Strategies

The College acknowledges that all pupils are different and so a range of strategies/approaches will be used to deliver the Curriculum.

The use of new technologies is encouraged as is practical, hands on learning. Whole class, group and individual work all take place where they are going to

be most effective. Schemes of work are differentiated to provide appropriate challenges for the differing ability levels of pupils.

With Classroom 2000 (C2k) as well as the changes to the KS3/4 curriculum the College provides for an exciting and relevant learning experience. Active learning methods are encouraged and a range of approaches to questioning have also been piloted.

Assessment

Assessment procedures will be used to monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils in each subject area.

Methods of assessment vary in some subject areas and will include pupil observation, classwork, practical, investigative and project work; aural work, tests, examinations and homework.

Marking for improvement is central to the assessment of pupil work and the importance of target setting for individual pupils is acknowledged.

Opportunities are provided for pupils to carry out self-assessment/evaluation in all subjects in year 8, 9 and 10 and in a range of other subjects in other years.

External tests and examinations are provided in a range of subject areas and at various stages in the curriculum. ***Details of these can be found in Appendix One.***

Record Keeping and reporting

Individual departments will determine which assessments are formally recorded for record keeping purposes. These results which are recorded provide ongoing information on pupil progress and can be used in the preparation of reports to parents at various stages of the school year.

Reports on pupil progress will be provided three times each school year as follows:

- (a) **Christmas Report**
This report is based on topic tests and homework completed in the autumn term. It generally includes grades for work and effort. Parents are also given information on attendance, lateness and detentions (where applicable).
- (b) **The Summer Report.**
Largely based on end of year examinations, this report gives parents an overall picture of a young person's progress in relation to his/her peers of a similar ability. Results are generally given as either a grade or exam % and the class average is also recorded.

Marks for effort are also recorded as is attendance, lateness and detentions (where applicable).

This year we will be piloting a Pupil Profile style report with 8A.

This is in keeping with the requirements of the Revised Curriculum.

As well as reporting on subject areas, parents will be informed of their child's progress in the Cross Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Maths, Using ICT and other skills such as Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities.

(c) **The Parent Teacher Consultation**

These meetings provide parents with general feedback on progress and whilst it is broadly subjective in nature, teachers may draw upon recorded assessments to substantiate comments which they make regarding academic progress.

A pupil summary, recording achievements is completed by pupils at the end of years 8, 10 and 11.

Pupils are also encouraged to keep an ongoing record of their Achievements and Experiences in their Progress File Presenter which they then take home at the end of KS4. The Getting Started Moving On and Widening Horizons booklets provided by CEA are used throughout key stages 3, 4 and 5 in the areas of Employability and Careers.

Home/School Links

The school encourages a strong partnership between home and school. Parents are welcome to contact their son's/daughter's Form Teacher or Head of Year for clarification on any matter of concern. A parents night is held during the first week for all new pupils in Year 8. This gives an opportunity for parents and Form Teachers/Heads of Year/SLT to meet and get to know each other.

Parents who wish to visit the College are always welcome. Appointments may be made through the headmaster's secretary - **telephone number 028 93 362347**.

Extra Curricular Activities

Carrickfergus College offers a wide range of extra curricular activities both during and after school. These activities are designed to encourage the development of skills, and to enrich the physical, spiritual, and socio-cultural experiences of our pupils.

The school currently offers the following extra curricular activities some of which may be seasonal: -

- Art Club
- Athletics Club
- Badminton Club

- Basketball Club
- Chess Club
- Choir
- Christian Union – Junior and Senior
- Comenius (European Links) Project
- Computer/ Multi Media Club
- Cross Country
- Cricket Club
- Dance Club
- Driver Training Scheme
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme
- Hockey Club
- Homework Club
- Key Camp Residential
- Languages Club
- Lit Club
- Little Chefs Cookery Club
- Maths Club
- Netball Club
- Rambling Club
- Rugby Clubs (Junior and Senior)
- School Production
- Soccer Club
- Technology Club
- Volleyball Club

Assembly

School assemblies take place Tuesday – Friday weekly. The Principal/Heads of Year conduct assemblies and at times guest speakers are invited. Assemblies also provide opportunities to celebrate successes and communicate important issues to pupils. Special services are held at Christmas and Easter for the whole school and at other times to facilitate guest speakers such as the Gideons International and other charitable organisations.

Community Links.

Our school has established positive and supportive links with the local community, which provide a valuable resource for experiential learning. Through our well developed links with the primary schools we endeavour to create a welcoming and friendly environment for our prospective year 8 pupils. Our older pupils and members of staff, also run Enterprise Primary programmes in the local primary schools and this is extended to include ICT and Numeracy as part of Specialist School Status.

Our links with Rotary Youth Leadership, CABLE and various other organisations provide pupils with the opportunity to develop personal and social skills. Our Careers department's links with business and the local community gives pupils the opportunity to gain experience in the world of work. Our pupils are encouraged to participate through these activities and

others such as Youth Sport and The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. We have close, strong links with both the local Rugby and Hockey clubs. The College choir regularly perform at venues in the local community for a range of audiences. A Community Cup is presented annually to the pupil who has contributed most to his/her local community.

The College encourages links with a number of other outside groups. Our Specialist School status in Business and Enterprise allows us to extend the level of community involvement within our school. We have maintained our long established links with PAKT, to allow this community group to use our schools facilities. We have begun involving the local community by running evening classes in our school. Our school has links with Further education to widen the choice of subjects offered to our GCSE students. This year we have begun to offer Occupational Studies in Hair and Beauty and it is our intention to expand this range of subjects over the next year.

School Homework Policy

Homework is set to supplement learning in school. It is an opportunity for pupils to work independently and to practise what they have been taught in class. It is also a chance for parents to get involved with their child's education.

Homeworks will be set regularly in the interests of: -

- Encouraging the development of skills learned in school
- The development of independent study skills
- Practising and consolidating work done in class
- Keeping parents in touch with their child's school work.

A copy of the homework timetable is posted out in September each year. Further copies can be obtained by contacting the school office.

Implementation of the Homework Policy

- Heads of Department, in consultation with class teachers, decide on the appropriate amount of homework to be set for each year group.
- The Vice Principal co-ordinates the whole school requirements and produces a homework schedule for all classes.
- Each pupil is given a copy of this homework timetable. This timetable is sent home for reference purposes.
- Pupils are given a homework diary at the beginning of the school year. Pupils needing a new diary during the year may purchase a diary from Mrs Edwards or Mr Webb.
- Homeworks are recorded by pupils in their homework diary. Subject teachers will ensure that this is done. Homeworks are recorded in the space related to the day on which they are due.
- Parents sign the diary weekly.
- Form teachers check and sign diaries on a weekly basis during registration. Form teachers ensure that all homeworks are recorded. If

homeworks are not being recorded this is investigated and the Head of Year informed if necessary. Form teachers keep a record of when/if diaries have been signed.

- Heads of Year check homework diaries during Book and Equipment checks.
- Mrs MacQuarrie organises book and equipment checks on a half termly basis to ensure that all pupils come to school prepared with all the necessary books, a diary, pens/pencils etc.
- Initially subject teachers deal with any pupils not completing homeworks. It can be useful to involve parents at an early stage. If the problem persists the Head of Department is involved. The Head of Department may wish to involve the Head of Year to see if this is a problem across a number of subjects.
- Persistent offenders will be referred to the Vice Principal/Senior Teachers.
- Subject teachers complete a homework record sheet weekly and return to their Head of Department. Heads of Departments send a copy to Mr Webb for storage.

Suggested Guidelines for time allocation.

Years 8 and 9	-	5 hours per week
Year 10	-	7 hours per week
Years 11 and 12	-	8 - 10 hours per week
Years 13 and 14	-	This will vary according to assignments but personal study should average at least 20 hours a week.

Marking of Homeworks

Homework is an integral part of the school's assessment practice. Each departments' policy on marking should be understood by pupils and parents. The written and oral feedback provided by teachers' will enable pupils to improve their performance. Homeworks will be marked promptly so that pupils get early feedback.

Homework Club

The homework club meets in the Library/Resource Area S12 after school.

MON TUE WED THUR
3.30pm – 4.30pm

This is an opportunity for pupils to complete homeworks using the resources available in school. Staff are present to give help and guidance. Pupils are encouraged to take full advantage of this facility.

Book /Equipment check

Book and equipment checks take place during registration at regular intervals. The aim is to ensure that all pupils come to school properly equipped for lessons. Pupils should have the essentials for a day in school:

- School bag
- Books – in good condition, no graffiti present
- Pens/pencils, etc
- Homework diary – up-to-date and signed by form teacher and parent.
- Jotter
- Complete school uniform worn correctly.

Careers Programme.

Students are introduced to (CEAIG) Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance from year 8 through the Employability Programme. This encourages pupils to realise their skills, qualities, strengths, interests, aspirations and values, which will enable them to make informed decisions both in the short and long term; from choosing GCSE Options to preparing themselves for life and work.

In years 11 – 14 this is developed into a careers programme. Pupils' participation in the Careers classes develops their skills related to making choices based on information, resources available, and the ability to work with others and the attitudes of people to different types of occupations.

The pupils are offered interviews with a Careers Officer from the Training and Employment Agency to prepare them for the transition from school to working life.

Pupils have the use of our Careers Suite and a comprehensive careers library including prospectuses from a range of colleges, universities and training centres.

Work Experience forms a central part of the Careers programme for all year 12 and 13 pupils. This is invaluable for helping our pupils to gain an insight into the world of work.

Pupils also take part in a wide range of activities such as, Interview Skills days, Career Planning days, and customer care qualifications such as Welcome Host.

The four Post-Primary schools in the local area collaborate to organise and host a Careers Convention each year for the students in years 12, 13 and 14. This is supported by a wide variety of Universities, Training Organisations and industry.

The College is a founder member of CABLE (Carrickfergus Area Business Links with Education), which aims to develop closer links between education and business in the area. It also offers a large number of programmes for pupils in the school.

Peer Mentoring System/Circle Time

The Peer Mentoring System and Circle time encourages pupils to develop self-confidence and acquire effective communication skills. The Peer Mentoring System builds on the willingness of young people to turn to their peers with their anxieties and provides a supportive service. The Circle Time programme enhances pupils self esteem respect for each other and creates a working atmosphere of co-operation.

As part of a whole school approach these schemes play a significant part in creating a caring environment, which enables the students to develop as emotionally healthy, active citizens with the confidence and skills to achieve their full academic potential.

Students are encouraged to develop skills in empathy, tolerance, respect and self-worth.

Personal Development

Personal Development is about the holistic development of individuals. There is now clear evidence that highlights the importance of promoting the emotional intelligence in young people alongside other aspects of health promotion. Personal Development involves providing learning opportunities to develop values, attitudes and skills as well as the acquisition of knowledge.

Personal Development can help promote personal relationships in the school community and enable young people to work towards achieving their full potential, to become confident and independent and participative citizens. Personal Development also equips young people to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

At Key stage 3 level the school follows the “In Sync” Personal Development programme which is delivered in a discrete period by Heads of Year or trained Personal Development staff. All of the materials reflect and support the school’s ethos and pastoral care policy and programme. “In Sync” has been developed around ten themes which reflect the development of the whole person and which address the statement of minimum requirement for Personal Development. Those ten themes are broken down into sub themes and mapped across Years 8 – 10 to ensure clear and appropriate links and progression throughout.

At Key stage 4 level all pupils study Learning for Life and Work which has Personal Development as one of the three strands alongside Citizenship and Employability. Personal Development is part of an overall package helping young people reach their full potential.

Pastoral Care

The welfare of every pupil is the concern of every member of staff. To this end the system used in the College involves a male and female Head of Year for each year group, who move through from year 8 - year 12. This ensures consistency for all pupils. Form classes are of mixed ability with the Form teacher also staying with the pupils from year 8 – year 12 where possible.

Form teachers are the first point of contact for pupils each day. They provide pastoral support as well as monitoring attendance and time keeping.

Heads of Year meet with the Head of Pastoral Care on a weekly basis to discuss pertinent issues. They also meet with their Form Teachers regularly, giving the opportunity for feedback regarding year group issues. The Department of Education provides a Counselling Service one half day per week through the organisation Contact Youth.

Child Protection

The welfare of each child is paramount. Consequently and in keeping with legal requirements, we have a designated teacher – Mrs Edwards to whom any concern about pupils' welfare is reported. The designated teacher is responsible for informing the relevant agencies about such concerns. The deputy-designated teacher is Mr Campbell or Mr Borland.

Enterprise Education

Enterprise Education is about inspiring, equipping and creating young people to learn and success through enterprise.

At the College we want to raise awareness of entrepreneurship, develop personal skills to help our students succeed in, 'the real world', the world of work and from an early age begin their personal journey that they need to take to get to where they want to be in the future.

Through role-play games, multimedia input, examples from the real world and challenging activities our students will become active participants in enterprise from Year 8.

Business & Enterprise has been added to the school curriculum with all Year 8 & 9 students having a class each week. This is designed to give the students the opportunity to gain personal experience of how businesses work, understand the importance of business so that they can develop their enterprising mind even further.

The students have also the opportunity to participate in the following projects:-

- Big School Programme
- YE Nine
- Enterprise in Action
- Quick Start

- Personal Economics
- Learn to Earn
- Enterprise in Action
- Presenting Skills
- Success Skills
- Presenting Yourself

At the College, Enterprise Education is run to give the students the opportunity to meet and experience as much of the 'real world' as possible.

International Links

Carrickfergus College has forged strong links with schools internationally through a variety of programmes, and has been awarded the International Award by the British Council at intermediate level.

- Successful Comenius cross-curricular projects have taken place with schools from Italy, Spain, Latvia and Germany. Preparations are currently taking place for a third project between the schools.
- Both junior and senior school pupils take part in the European Studies Programme, exchanging work with six different schools from across Ireland, UK and Europe. The work is completed during citizenship classes (Junior School) and with sixth form students completing the Certificate in Personal Effectiveness.
- Organised through the British Council Carrickfergus College takes part in the 'Connecting Classrooms' programme which aims to improve the accuracy of young UK and African perspectives of each others' cultures. Alongside Carrickfergus Grammar and Downshire School we are partnered with schools from Zimbabwe and Nigeria, exchanging curricular work and taking part in teacher exchange visits.
- The Key Camp programme enables pupils from our school to work with pupils from the Republic of Ireland developing Enterprise and leadership skills.
- Carrickfergus College host a Comenius Assistant two days per week, providing an opportunity for international awareness activities and additional support for our Polish speaking pupils
- Staff at the college can avail of European and international study visits through Comenius funding and the Transversal Programme, helping then to disseminate the international dimension to their pupils and colleagues.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

H. Webb – Curriculum Co-ordinator
September 2008

Appendix One: - External Examinations 2008/09

Key Stage 3 Tests

CCEA

English
Mathematics
Mental Maths
Science
ICT

Key Stage 4 GCSE

CCEA

Art
Business Studies
English
Geography
History
Home Economics
Hospitality
ICT
Learning for Work and Life
Music
RE
Technology and Design
Science Double Award
Business and Communication Systems

AQA

French
Physical Education
Science – Single
Award
Spanish
English Literature
Media Studies

OCR

Child Development
Mathematics

A Level

AQA

Health and Social Care, Travel and Tourism, English Literature (Yr 14)

CCEA

Applied Business
Art (Yr14)
English Literature (Yr13)
History
RE
Applied ICT

Edexcel

Art and Design (Yr 13)

OCR

Mathematics

Additional Exams

CCEA

C.O.P.E.
Key Skills

WJEC

Film Studies