



WESTMINSTER UNDER SCHOOL

CURRICULUM POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Westminster Under School is an extremely successful academic school that offers a broad education. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves, discuss and debate in lessons and through this develop a real love of learning.

At Westminster Under School, pupils follow an enhanced academic curriculum which corresponds both to their needs and to Common Entrance and Scholarship requirements. Lessons are taught by specialists who are passionate about their subjects and this provides our students with a confidence and gravitas that sets them apart in their post-13 schools.

The curriculum at Westminster Under School is an effective preparation for all of the opportunities and responsibilities that our boys will encounter as part of a modern British society.

The aims of our curriculum are to:

- develop a vibrant learning environment in which both pupils and teachers are continually challenged and stimulated.
- encourage learning and knowledge for their own sake, and not be over-bound by exam requirements.
- be open-minded and enthusiastic in our teaching, to encourage our boys to question and to assist them in forming and articulating their own ideas.
- build on the boys' intellectual curiosity and stimulate an enjoyment of learning, analysis and scholarship.
- praise the boys' efforts and progress wherever possible and to give constructive support.
- foster good working habits and an understanding of the importance of application, not least through our own prompt and detailed marking and comments.
- encourage a sense of working together, for example through team and group work as well as individual tasks.

ENTRY POINTS AND OUTLINE CURRICULUM

Years 3 and 4

Up to twenty-two boys are selected following examination for entry into Year 3. Another twenty-two boys are selected following examination for entry into Year 4.

In Years 3 and 4 the boys are taught the core curriculum, where possible, by their form teacher: English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education). There are specialist teachers for French, Music, Art, RS, ICT, PE and Games.

Years 5 and 6

In Years 5 and 6 there are specialist teachers for all subjects. In Year 5 the boys are introduced to Classics (Greek and Roman mythology) as a prelude to studying Latin in Year 6.

Years 7 and 8

Up to twenty-eight boys are selected following examination for entry into Year 7 at age 11+ and they join those boys coming through from Year 6. Most of the new boys will not have studied French or Latin and may be behind existing pupils in other subject areas. Saturday morning classes from March until July, prior to entry, will enable these boys to begin to catch up with their peers before joining Westminster Under School.

In Year 8 the boys are divided into four forms, two of which prepare for Common Entrance and two for scholarship examinations. Greek is added to the curriculum in Year 8.

All boys have a weekly PSHE lesson and Study Skills is offered to pupils in all year groups.

All boys in Years 7 & 8 receive Careers Advice through visiting speakers.

The School curriculum by year group and timetable is shown in tabular form at Appendix 1.

Preparation for Senior Schools

The boys are prepared for entry to senior schools at age 13+ either through the Common Entrance examination or Scholarship examinations. Entry to Westminster (the Great School) is not compulsory or automatic for Under School boys. However, the vast majority of boys choose Westminster and gain successful entry. All boys entering at 11+ are expected to go to Westminster subject to success at Common Entrance or the Challenge scholarship exams.

Teachers liaise regularly with colleagues at the Great School to ensure a seamless transition between the schools. Approximately half of Year 8 sit The Challenge, Westminster's scholarship examination, or other schools' scholarship papers. This figure is significantly higher than the number of scholarships available, but it reflects the very high standard of work being achieved by the boys. In the unlikely event that an Under School boy does not meet the required Common Entrance standard in a scholarship paper he may be asked to sit that paper at Common Entrance level. Notwithstanding their academic work, boys are strongly encouraged to continue to partake fully in all the extra-curricular activities on offer.

Syllabus

Parents are given details of the curriculum at the beginning of each year and it is also available on APTUS, the School's Virtual Learning Environment.

Academic Planning and Oversight

The Deputy Master, in co-ordination with the Assistant Master (Academic) is responsible for overseeing academic provision across the school and for monitoring learning, teaching and academic progress.

The Heads of each department are responsible for the planning and delivery of the scheme of work (SOW) and the co-ordination of staff in their departments. Heads of Departments meet each term to discuss areas of development within the curriculum and their departments.

We aim for a whole school approach where high quality teaching, differentiated for individual boys, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). Teachers are expected to accommodate boys' learning differences in order to reduce barriers to effective learning. However, where a teacher suspects a Pupil may need additional support with their learning a referral form ought be completed and sent to the School's SENDCO.

Presentation

Pupils are required to follow the School policy for presentation of their work which is at Appendix 2. It is displayed in all classrooms and referred to by teachers regularly. If any boy is found to have issues with handwriting they will be identified and referred to the Head of English who will then raise the concern with the SENDCO and the Assistant Master (Academic).

THE ROLE OF HOMEWORK

We are strong believers in the importance of homework for intelligent and well-motivated boys. Homework allows boys to demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of their academic work, it helps boys to make strong academic progress and aids boys and teachers in identifying areas to strengthen.

Homework can be used to prepare for lessons and as a means of stretching the ablest.

Homework is also designed to encourage individual and independent learning.

Homework is important in fostering good working habits in the boys and an understanding of the importance of application (see the Aims of the Curriculum on page 1).

Homework should always be used to develop and enhance what is learnt in the classroom. It should therefore, be seen as building on what is covered in lessons, rather than as a separate assignment or as introducing a topic.

See the Homework Policy at Appendix 3 for a fuller summary of the School's current approach to homework.

Identification of Learning Differences

All boys are considered to be academically gifted having sat demanding Entrance Assessments at 7+, 8+ or 11+.

When a teacher suspects that a pupil may have a learning difference or difficulty, details are recorded in a Study Skills referral form which is given to the person in charge of SEND.

Our provision for academic support is outlined in the Assessment, Marking, Recording and Reporting Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation of teaching and learning

This takes place through frequent lesson observation, particularly through the Professional Development and Review (PDR) process and through departmental review including work scrutiny. Each half term colleagues are encouraged to undertake at least one mutual observation.

Curriculum Enhancement

Outside the classroom Music, Drama, Art and Sport have an important part to play in School life and trips and competitions are valued highly. There are opportunities to join choirs and orchestras, take part in plays and concerts, participate in a whole range of sports and House competitions for scrabble, general knowledge, chess, public speaking, music and sport.

Every year group has a compulsory residential trip as well as numerous day trips to museums, galleries, theatres, churches, temples, castles etc. There are also regular trips abroad during the school holidays: the Classics trip to Italy, the French trip and the football and cricket tours. In recent years the choir has toured South America, China and South Africa. There have been Geography trips to Iceland and the USA.

Events such as the Harvest Festival, Rich Man/Poor Man Lunch, Christmas Fair, Readathon and Summer Fete are all designed to raise awareness amongst the pupils of people who enjoy few luxuries or privileges in the UK and abroad. All the money raised in these events is donated to a range of charities. Pupils are also encouraged to help the local community.

Approximately three times a term visiting speakers, many from the parent body, will address the whole school usually during a Friday morning assembly. Speakers can include politicians, journalists, authors, sportsmen, explorers and lawyers. The School's central London location gives it ready access to distinguished visitors of many kinds and their talks help to give the boys a broader perspective on life.

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Deputy Master who reports to the Master.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

APPENDIX 1

Table showing structure of the School Curriculum from timetable 2015/16 of 35 minute lessons.

Year	English	Maths	Science	French	History	Geography	RS/ Ethics	Latin	Greek	Classical Studies	Drama	Computer Science	Art and Design	Music	Games	PE or PE/Activities	Swim	PSHE	Total
3	7	7	3	1	2	2	1					2	2	2	5	2	2	2	40
4	7	6	3	2	2	2	1					2	2	2	5	2	2	2	40
5	6	7	4	3	2	2	1			1	1	2	2	2	6	2	2	1	44
6	6	6	4	4	2	2	2	3			1	1	2	2	6	1	1	1	44
7 Old	5	6	5.5	4	2	2	2	4			1	1	2	2	6	1	1	1	45
7 New	5	6	5.5	5	2	2	2	4			1	1	2	1	6	1	1	1	45
8 CE	5	6	5	5	2.5	2.5	2	4			1		2	1	6	2		1	45
8 Schol	5	5	5	5	2.5	2.5	1	4	1		1		2	1	6	2		1	45

POLICY FOR BOYS ON PRESENTATION OF WORK

You should take pride in all you do at the Under School. Show this in your writing - make sure the reader is on your side!

Equipment

You are expected to have the following items, in every lesson:

- A named pencil case
- *At least* two pens (plus replacement cartridges if necessary)
- *At least* two pencils
- An eraser
- A sharpener
- A highlighter
- A 15cm or 30 cm ruler
- At least five colouring-pencils

Presentation Guidelines

When handwriting, all pupils are expected to:

- Write the date in the top right-hand corner of the page; underline using a ruler
- Write the title in the centre of the page (subheadings are not to be centred); the first word, and every significant word after that, should be capitalised (nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs). All headings must be underlined using a ruler
- Indent new paragraphs
- Write exercise-numbers etc. in the margin
- Write in ink once the *Ink-Licence*TM has been acquired; blue ink is preferable to black
- Draw a simple line through errors before making corrections; avoid scribbles at all costs!
- Draw diagrams and accompanying illustrations in pencil; labels and annotations are to be completed in pencil
- Use colouring-pencils rather than felt-tip pens

When word-processing:

- Lay-out the date and title as above, in bold for emphasis
- Stick to a sensible font, size and colour
- Leave a line between paragraphs, answers and tasks; there is no need to indent when typing

HOMEWORK POLICY

The time taken to do homework will vary significantly from boy to boy, but the following may be considered as a rough guide. Homework will always be set on a specific night and should not exceed the recommended 30 minutes per homework, except in Year 8 when 35 – 40 minute homeworks can occasionally be set.

Year 3:	20 minutes per night, plus reading
Year 4:	30 minutes per night, plus reading
Year 5:	50/60 minutes per night (two subjects)
Year 6:	60 minutes per night (two subjects) + one 90 minutes(three subjects)
Year 7:	90 minutes per night (three subjects)
Year 8:	100/105 minutes per night (three subjects)

Parental Support for Homework

Parents are expected to help in various ways, as outlined in the parents' handbook:

- Provide a suitable desk and chair in a quiet room.
- Check the homework diary each day, monitor how well the work has been done and sign the diary, indicating how much time your son spent on each task. Be prepared to reject work that seems to have been done too quickly.
- Show an interest in the homework, engage in discussion with your son about the tasks set, but encourage him to work independently.
- Slower and more anxious boys sometimes spend too long on homework in efforts to attain perfection. This can become a problem and the form teacher should be alerted if this is the case, by leaving a note in the homework diary.
- Inform the teacher if a problem arises and homework cannot be completed. If a boy gets stuck with his homework, parents are encouraged to help by showing how to do it, but not doing it for him. If help has been given, a note should be put in the homework diary.

Homework Diaries

All boys will receive a homework diary/prep notebook at the beginning of each term. Inside the diary are some rules and instructions for both parents and boys.

Homework diaries should be handed in every day to be checked by form teacher. It is perfectly in order for a teacher to remind a parent who is consistently failing to sign the notebook - and who is therefore probably not attending carefully enough to what work is being done. If a diary is lost, a new one must be issued without delay, and a sanction applied if the pupil has clearly been careless.

A table showing the homework to be set for Years 3-8 is below:

Homework Timetable – September 2016

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3V	English or Maths	Maths or English	Reading	Spellings	Topic
4H	English or Maths	Maths or English	Reading	Spellings	Topic
4W	English or Maths	Maths or English	Reading	Spellings	Topic
5M	Science English	English Maths	Art & Design French	Maths French	History Geography
5T	Maths Art & Design	English Geography	French Science	History Maths	French English
6G	French English	Science Maths Geography	History RS	Art & Design Maths	Latin English
6H	English Maths	Science History Latin	Geography French	Maths RS	Art & Design English
7D	Art & Design Latin English	Maths Science RS	Geography French	English Science History	French Maths Latin
7R	Science Maths History	English Latin French	RS Geography	Art & Design Latin Maths	English Science French
7S	English Maths History	RS French Science	Art & Design Latin	Geography Maths Science	English French Latin
7T	Art & Design Latin French	Science History Maths	English Latin	French Geography RS	Maths Science English
8C	Science English Maths	RS French Latin	History Science	Latin French Geography	English Maths Art & Design
8E	Art & Design Science French	English Geography Latin	French Maths	History Latin Science	Greek English Maths
8H	Maths Science Greek	Art & Design Latin French	English Geography	Maths Latin French	English Science History
8R	English Latin History	Maths French Science	Art & Design RS	English Science Maths	French Latin Geography

