



THE DOWNS

MALVERN COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching must aim to equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives and must be fun, rewarding and stimulating. Appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all children. When planning, teachers must set suitable learning challenges and respond to children's diverse learning needs. A number of children have particular learning and assessment requirements, at both ends of the spectrum. The School is committed to offering an inclusive and differentiated curriculum to ensure the best possible progress for all pupils, whatever their need or abilities.

Effective teaching

When teaching, the focus must be on motivating the children and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. School schemes of work should guide teaching but not unnecessarily restrict discussion or variation should a lesson move in a different direction. The scheme sets out the aims, objectives and values of the school and details what is to be taught to each year group and class.

Teaching must be based on knowledge of the children's level of attainment and a judgement of their potential. The prime focus of the teaching is to develop further the knowledge and skills of the children and should ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs, due regard will be given to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs). There should be an aim to match work to the needs of the individual, taking into account both teaching and learning styles. Results from all internal and external assessments, including PIPS, CAT, NFER tests and internal examinations are used to monitor the progress being made by all children and guide future teaching.

High expectations should be made of all children, and their work should be of the highest possible standard for each individual.

The staff set targets for the children throughout the school and these are shared with parents at parents' meetings and through reports. The progress of each child is reviewed at the end of the academic year and revised targets are set.

Lessons are planned with clear learning objectives. Planning contains information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and the way assessment of the children's work is to occur. Lessons are evaluated in order that modifications and improvements can be made to teaching in the future.

Each teacher makes a special effort to establish good working relationships with all children in the class. All children are treated with kindness and respect. Children are treated fairly and given equal opportunity to take part in class activities. Staff follow the school policy with regard to discipline and classroom management and a school code of conduct is set and agreed with children. All children are expected to comply with this code to promote the best learning opportunities for all. Children are praised for their efforts and, by so doing, are helped to build positive attitudes towards school and learning in general. Good order and behaviour are insisted upon at all times.

Staff ensure that all tasks and activities that the children are asked to perform are safe, and when planning to take children out of school, parents are first informed and their permission obtained. In the case of boarding pupils, permission is granted by the House Parents. Risk assessments are carried out appropriately.

Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are deployed effectively as possible. Sometimes they work with individual children and sometimes they work with small groups.



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All classrooms should be attractive learning environments with displays changed regularly to ensure that the classroom reflects the topics studied by the children. It is the aim that all children have the opportunity to display their best work at some time during the year. All junior form rooms have a range of dictionaries and fiction and non-fiction books, as well as displays relating to literacy and numeracy. A stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality work by the children.

The Curriculum

In the Early Years Department, pupils are 'taught' in small groups using Montessori methods, following the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Whenever appropriate, they join in with Pre Prep and whole school assemblies and invite older pupils and staff to visit them during 'topic weeks', which are distributed at regular times throughout the year. Specialist music teachers take the pupils for music sessions.

When pupils move to Reception they are organised in mixed-ability classes and the Early Years Foundation Stage is covered. A slightly more formal approach to teaching is introduced, although the week is not split into defined subjects at this stage. The exceptions here are in music and French, where specialist teachers from the Prep department teach the children and also swimming, which takes place once per week off site. After school clubs are offered in the whole of Pre Prep, starting in Reception. These include craft, sport and music-centred activities.

Years 1 and 2 are also organised in mixed ability classes. They are taught by their form teachers for the majority of subjects, but receive specialist teaching for Design and Technology, ICT, music, French and swimming. Dance and drama are available as after school activities. The timetable in these years is more structured, but allows enough flexibility to take on 'topic-based' work.

In Year 3, pupils move to the Prep School. The teaching in Years 3 and 4 is very similarly organised to that in Years 1 and 2. Classes are taught by form teachers as much as possible, with specialist teaching in some subjects. In Year 5 there is slightly less emphasis on 'form' teaching so that pupils become more independent in their organisation. This means that they move around the school more regularly from lesson to lesson. In Year 6 all teaching is subject based and in maths and English, pupils are set.

In addition Years 7 and 8 pupils have the opportunity to study Latin, Spanish or German. They are organised in mixed ability forms for registrations, streams for the majority of subjects and sets for maths and English. All pupils are working towards Common Entrance and pupils in the top stream are generally aiming to sit an Academic Scholarship, either to Malvern College or the Senior school of their choice. Pupils who are in the third stream do not take Latin (unless there are special circumstances) as it is deemed more important for them to have further support in maths and English. There is fluidity between streams if it is deemed appropriate, but only after lengthy discussion with all interested parties.

At the end of Year 8, after Common Entrance, a programme of activities is organised. These activities are chosen by the staff to prepare pupils for the next stage of their lives and may take place in or out of the classroom, on or off site.

PSHE is taught throughout the school both as a discreet subject up to year 6 and more informally through expectations of pupils and inputs in other subject areas. It is intended to introduce this as a discreet subject in years 7 and 8 in September 2009

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