

Statutory Curriculum Policies

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. It enables teachers and pupils:

- to identify the quality of learning and the extent to which skills have been developed;
- to recognise weaknesses and to plan future teaching on the basis of that recognition;
- to set targets for future achievement;
- to allow pupils to take control of their own learning.

It encompasses teacher assessment, peer assessment and self-assessment and can happen in every interaction in a class where challenges upon which judgments can be made are set – via questioning, practical work, group work, oral presentations, ICT-based presentations as well as in written responses.

This policy deals with specific facets of assessment, namely:

- assessment for learning;
- homework;
- school examinations;
- reporting.

It is designed to:

- be in line with the school's aim and objectives;
- to assist with the delivery of targets within the school development plan;
- to support the school's behaviour management system;
- to develop the self-esteem of pupils by measuring performance and not making judgments about individuals' personal worth.

It establishes principles and practical guidelines that should be reflected in departmental policy and that should inform the work of all teaching staff.

Assessment for Learning

Assessment for learning will be an integral part of work throughout the school. It will be successfully demonstrated in some of the following ways, which should be embedded in the day-by-day work of teachers.

- Teachers will always make pupils aware in advance of assessed work what is being assessed and the criteria by which assessment is being made.
- Teachers, by their enthusiasm for and command of their subjects, will instil within pupils a desire to embrace their stated learning intentions.
- Pupils will be made aware of how they are learning and not simply what they should be learning, via classroom discourse that talks about the processes by which pupils learn.
- Oral and written feedback will identify strengths and also provide guidance on how pupils might build on them.
- Oral and written feedback will identify weaknesses and provide guidance on how pupils might overcome them
- Open-ended questions.
- Peer assessment.
- Pupil-evaluation, that can be oral and informal or written and formal, of how well classroom practice helped pupils learn.

Where major pieces of work are required, for instance projects and fieldwork, planning, drafting and in some cases submission of material will be done in small manageable steps, with clear success criteria shared with pupils before work is undertaken. and formative feedback given at every stage. Where controlled assessment is done as part of GCSE coursework, pupils will be given clear guidance on success criteria before the work starts.

Homework

Homework is essential in order that pupils consolidate learning and develop the skills and discipline necessary for independent study. The following guidelines should inform the setting and marking of homework throughout the school.

- As far as possible within subjects, a variety of tasks should be set (writing, reading, research, note-taking, factual learning).
- While homework in the junior school should be set in line with the homework timetable, it should arise naturally out of work done in class, as much a part of the teacher's preparation as the content of the lesson itself.
- Heads of Departments should ensure the setting of homework is regular but that pupils are not overburdened.
- Pupils are expected to present homework tidily. Homework books should be neat and free of graffiti.
- Homework will be marked and returned promptly.
- Criteria for success should be communicated with and noted by pupils before the homework is done.
- Marking should only assess those criteria that have been shared in advance with pupils.
- Comment should identify strengths in the work and one area for improvement.
- The participation of parents in their sons' learning is encouraged and teachers may ask that homework is signed by parents.
- Marking, in terms of marginal notation, annotation and mark bands, will be consistent within departments, with this consistency checked by the setting and cross-marking of **one benchmark homework per term**.
- A thorough record of homework marks should be maintained by all teachers, recording late submission of homework as well as marks.

Tests and Examinations

Years 8 – 11 will be examined in class time in or around the third week in November. Years 12 and 13 will sit mock examinations in late-January and early February. Year 14 students will be examined in completed modules in those subjects in which they are not taking external examinations in January, during class time late in the Christmas Term or in the first half of the Easter Term. Years 8 – 11 will sit timetabled examinations in late May.

The setting and marking of examinations will be based on the following guidelines.

- Mark weightings for areas of knowledge and specific skills tested in the examinations will reflect their weighting during the year's teaching.
- Every paper will have a cover sheet, outlining clearly the subject, year group, time allocated and specific instructions.
- Papers will be checked and proof-read within departments prior to the examinations.
- Marking will be consistent. In the interests of consistency a paper, or a discrete section of a paper, should be marked by one teacher for the whole year group, to agreed mark schemes.
- Assessment of summer examinations is both formative and summative assessment and feedback to pupils should be a significant feature of class work after the

examinations. Markers should summarise strengths and weaknesses of pupils' performance in written feedback to departmental colleagues. Mark schemes should be shared with pupils. They should be written clearly so that pupils have a clear idea of the criteria for assessment.

- Heads of Departments will e-mail raw scores to AVP in the weeks after the examinations so that ongoing records of pupils' progression and regression from one examination to the next can be kept.
- Heads of Department will be responsible for ensuring that the standards of marking across their departments is consistent.

Reporting

There will be informal and formal reporting during the year, as follows:

- Regular recording of merits and demerits on the behaviour management system.
- Reporting to Heads of Department during weeks of concern at the end of September and at the beginning of March.
- A report sent out at the end of the Christmas Term specifying a pupil's mark in Christmas examinations against the year average and a grade 1 – 5- for his effort.
- A report sent out before the end of June, specifying a pupil's mark in Summer examinations against the year average and including subject-specific comments, as well as comments on progress in the statutory areas of Learning for Life and Work, Communication, Use of Mathematics and ICT.

Monitoring/evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of this policy will be via:

- PRSD
- HoDs' overview, particularly in the assessing of benchmark homework
- SMT overview, e.g. via book scoops across a range of subjects.

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed by SMT and Heads of Departments in June 2010 and thereafter biennially.

CURRICULUM POLICY

Rationale

The curriculum provides the context within which pupils learn and develop the skills and capabilities that they will need for success in school and in all facets of their lives as adults. The structure and content of the curriculum are designed to provide the best possible context for this learning. This policy sets out to clarify the principles that underpin the taught curriculum offered by the school and to outline its configuration for all the year groups in the school.

It is also recognised that curriculum structure of itself will not guarantee effective learning. Learning depends on the wealth of human interaction that carries on day-by-day inside and outside timetabled lessons. To that end the policy also seeks to outline ways in which this ongoing human interaction can best be targeted to the needs of all pupils by incorporating policy sections on Learning and Teaching, Literacy and Numeracy.

SMT will review all sections of this policy annually and amend it where necessary in the light of evaluation within school and in the light of changes to statutory requirements.

THE TAUGHT CURRICULUM

Aims and Objectives

The construction of the curriculum is underpinned by three aims:

- to ensure that each pupil has an opportunity to develop his own unique blend of academic skills and aptitudes to the highest possible level;
- to ensure that the curriculum is broad, balanced, and relevant;
- to ensure that areas of curriculum specified by statute and by DENI guidelines are effectively delivered.

The curriculum is designed to provide a template for realising the following objectives:

- a culture within which learning is challenging and enjoyable;
- the development of all pupils as individuals, as citizens and as contributors to the economy;
- the opportunity for pupils to develop skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the subjects that they study;
- the development of a spiritual and moral sensibility that enables pupils to make their own informed decisions about ethical questions;
- the development of skills of independent learning and research;
- the progressive development of personal and inter-personal capabilities of self-management and working with others;

- the progressive development of critical and creative thinking skills of creativity, managing information, problem solving and decision making, throughout a pupil's time in the school;
- preparation for a world of work in which flexible working skills and adaptability of temperament will be needed for success;
- sound physical health and an understanding of issues relating to physical health that will enable pupils to make informed choices about how they treat their bodies during the years of their schooling and in later life;
- the development of self-esteem and confident social skills;
- a tolerance and appreciation of diversity
- the highest levels of achievement in public examinations of which pupils are capable.

The school day

The school day currently operates a timetable model of nine 35 minute periods per day. The distribution of periods is as follows:

8. 50 a.m.	Registration
9 a.m.	Assemblies, incorporating an act of worship, for all year groups.
9. 10 a.m.	Period 1
9. 45 a.m.	Period 2
10. 20 a.m.	Period 3
10. 55 a.m.	Break
11. 10 a.m.	Period 4
11. 45 a.m.	Period 5
12. 20 p.m.	Period 6
12. 55 p.m.	Period 7 (junior lunch)
1. 30 p.m.	Senior lunch
1. 40 p.m.	Period 8 (Years 8 – 10 only)
2.15 p.m.	Period 9
2. 50 p.m.	Period 10
3. 25 p.m.	End of school

Key Stage 3 (Years 8, 9 and 10)

Each Year group at Key Stage 3 comprises five core classes, usually with 25 boys in each class, for the study of English, Mathematics, Modern Foreign Languages, Geography, History, and Drama. In line with DENI circular 2004/5, issued March 2004, classes sizes in the following subjects are capped at 20: Art, Technology, Physical Education, Home Economics and Music. Science in Year 8 and the discrete sciences in Years 9 and 10 are also capped at 20.

The provision of subjects in each of these years is outlined below. The number of periods for the delivery of the taught subjects is in brackets.

Year 8: Every pupil will take English, including Media Education (5), Mathematics (5), Science (5), French (3), Geography (3), History (3), Technology (3), Music (2), Drama (2), Home Economics (2), Art (2), Learning for Life and Work (2), Information Technology (2) Physical Education (2), Religious Education (2) and Games (2).

Year 9: Every pupil will take English, including Media Education, (5), Mathematics (5), French (3), German **or** Spanish (3) Geography (3), History (3), Biology (2), Chemistry (2), Physics (2), Technology (2), Music (1), Drama (2), Home Economics (2), Art (2), Learning for Life and Work (2), Physical Education (2), Religious Education (2) and Games (2).

Year 10: Every pupil will take English, including Media Education (5), Mathematics (5), French (3), German **or** Spanish (4), Geography (3), History (3), Biology (2), Chemistry (2), Physics (2), Technology (2), Music (2), Drama (2), Art (2), Learning for Life and Work (2), Physical Education (2), Religious Education (2) and Games (2).

Progression within the Key Stage 3 curriculum

- ICT is delivered as a discrete subject in Year 8 only, to allow pupils to sharpen ICT skills learned at primary school and to develop new skills needed for work within discrete subjects in their new school. In Years 9 and 10 ICT skills are developed within the subjects to allow pupils to apply ICT within a wider learning context.
- Boys are offered a choice between German and Spanish in Year 9. Staffing resources dictate that two German classes must run alongside three Spanish classes but within these constraints, the school will provide as many pupils as possible with their first choice of a second Modern Language.
- Home Economics is only offered in Years 8 and 9 because of constraints on staffing and resources.
- Learning for Life and Work is taught in form classes by form teachers. Pupils follow programmes of work on Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability. Specialist guidance by careers teachers is given to pupils in Year 10, who follow a programme of career planning in preparation for making GCSE choices. While Learning for Life and Work is taught as a discrete subject with its own schemes of work, resources and departmental budget, it also infuses all other subjects in the curriculum and its aims are pursued within the wider extra-curricular life of the school.

Key Stage 4 (Years 11 and 12)

During the GCSE years, all pupils will study English, English Literature and Mathematics to examination level. The compulsory core also includes Physical

Education, Religious Education, Learning for Life and Work and Games. Of these, pupils may take Learning for Life and Work as an examination option or as a short course that delivers the school's own programme of work in line with the statements of minimum content as prescribed by CCEA. This programme of work has specific schemes of work for Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability that are delivered by specialist teachers to ad hoc classes of approximately 23/24 on a carousel basis, in blocks of 12 weeks in Year 11 and 10 weeks in Year 12. Religious Education will normally be taken as a certificated subject by all pupils, either as a full course GCSE or as a short course. Physical Education can be taken as a full GCSE but boys who opt for it will have proven their aptitude for the subject and their commitment to the sporting life of the school by representing the school in a sporting activity within Key Stage 3.

Seven periods per week are given to the study of English and English Literature. Five periods are given to the study of Mathematics. Beyond that, pupils select another six GCSE options, of which at least one must be a science subject. These are delivered in option blocks that are timetabled for four periods in year 11 and 5 in Year 12, or vice versa, so allowing an average teaching time of four and a half periods per week over the two years of the GCSE course.

These options are drawn from the following subjects:

Additional Mathematics, History, Geography, Art, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Technology, ICT, Business Studies, French, German, Spanish, Art, Drama, Music, Learning for Life and Work, Home Economics, Physical Education, Religious Education and Latin (short course).

Selecting GCSE options

For Year 10 boys, the process leading to the selection of options begins with a career planning day at the end of the Christmas Term and an Employability module delivered by Careers teachers as part of the Learning for Life and Work programme at the beginning of the Easter Term. Guidance to parents about their sons' suitability for GCSE subjects is given at the Year 10 Parental Consultation in mid-February, with choices being confirmed following interviews between the boys and their parents in late February or early March.

The following conditions apply to the selection of GCSE options:

- The school cannot guarantee that the timetable will accommodate every set of choices but parents will be asked to select a reserve option and every effort will be made to ensure that the reserve option becomes available for those whose choices cannot be accommodated. In every instance where the first set of choices cannot be accommodated, the school will contact parents by letter.
- When parents request changes to their sons' choices after the timetabling process has started, the school cannot guarantee that these changes can be made, particularly when the requested changes would drive up class sizes.

Class sizes in Physical Education, Technology, Music, Art and Home Economics will be capped at 20, as prescribed in DENI circular 2004/5. As a general principle, the school will endeavour to limit class sizes to 20 for all science subjects (capped at a maximum size of 24 by DENI circular 2004/5) and at 25 for all other subjects.

- Pupils who opt for Additional Mathematics will have shown an aptitude for Mathematics in the junior school.
- Boys with proven ability in Modern Foreign Languages may select GCSE Spanish from scratch in Year 11. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the same opportunity be given to a boy who wants to select German from scratch.

Extending the curriculum

While the majority of pupils will study 9 subjects, there will be opportunities for some pupils to study 10. Music will be offered to particularly gifted musicians as an accelerated course, with one period per week of directed teaching and the obligation placed on pupils to work in their own time. GCSE Financial Services has been offered for study within pupils' free time for the past 3 years and Journalism was similarly offered in September 2009. It is planned to offer Statistics and Journalism in September 2010 for boys who would like to take an extra GCSE outside curriculum time.

The Sixth Form (Year 13)

Entry to Sixth Form and curricular offer

Entry to the Sixth Form will normally depend on a pupil's achieving 7 GCSE passes at A-C or better, preferably with B grades in the subjects he wishes to take at AS Level. In certain subjects, specific criteria will be additionally required. Every student offered a place in the Sixth Form will sign an agreement to abide by the school's expected standards of conduct, appearance and commitment to work.

The school values the possibility of students following a slightly broader curriculum than under the old A Level arrangements that the study of 4 AS subjects allows – a broader curriculum consisting perhaps of 3 sciences and a Modern Foreign Language or 3 humanities subjects and a science. To that end most pupils will take 4 AS subjects. It is recognised, however, that the cognitive gap between GCSE and AS will make this difficult for some boys who have earned the right to a Sixth Form place and the following guidelines will apply when final decisions are made about AS choices in August. Using a tally of GCSE points where A* = 4, A = 3, B = 2 and C = 1:

- a student with 13 points or fewer will study 3;
- a student with 18 points or more will study 4;
- when a student's tally falls within 14 – 17, his AS curriculum will be discussed with the Academic Vice-Principal or Head of Sixth Form in August.

One exception to this is in the case of boys who wish to take a course in a neighbouring school under the Bangor Learning Partnership. The timetabling arrangements that facilitate this partnership can only be put in place for students who take 3 AS subjects.

It is also recognised that some students who are committed to the study of 4 AS subjects at the beginning of their Sixth Form career may find that they need to reduce to 3 subjects in order to cope with the demands of Sixth Form study. This will be arranged in consultation with the Academic Vice-Principal, following consultation with careers staff and all the student's teachers. If a reduction in the number of subjects taken is agreed, it will be implemented only after parents have given permission in writing.

Subjects on offer

Students select their AS subjects from the following: Mathematics, AS and A2 Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Technology, English Literature, Drama and Theatre Studies, French, German, Spanish, Art, Music, Business Studies, ICT, Politics, Physical Education and Religious Education.

AS subjects are taught in nine periods per week, apart from AS and A2 Mathematics which is delivered in twelve periods. Most boys who complete this course successfully will take Further Mathematics in Year 14. Class sizes in all practical subjects will be capped at twenty in line with guidance in DENI circular 2004/5.

Collaborative courses in Year 13

Currently the Bangor Learning Partnership offers collaborative courses to students, hosted in St.Columbanus' College (Moving Image Arts), Bangor Academy (Engineering, Psychology) and Bangor Grammar School (English Literature). A partnership with the South Eastern Regional College beginning in September 2010 will allow students to take one applied AS subject over two years, with directed teaching taking place one afternoon a week. The opportunity to take this course will be available to all students, regardless of the number of AS subjects they study. The school actively supports the work of this partnership and the work of the wider partnership that subsumes it, the North Down and Ards Area Learning Community, in the interests of broadening the learning experience of students and increasing the school's curricular offer as required by the Entitlement Framework.

Core curriculum and Enrichment

The core curriculum in Year 13 will be Learning for Life and Work (1 period) and Games (2 periods). Students who study 4 AS subjects will have 4 supervised study periods per week and those who take 3 will have 13.

Apart from those who are undertaking A2 Mathematics in one year, all other students will take two periods of Enrichment from the following range of options: Survival Cookery, First Aid, Technology, Latin, Critical Thinking, European Studies, Games Coaching and Primary School Support. The enrichment programme aims to complement the skills and capabilities being developed in within other AS subjects, to increase self-esteem and skills of working with others and to develop a wider vision of the world we live in.

The Sixth Form (Year 14)

Entry to Year 14

The transition from Year 13 to Year 14 is not automatic. Students who progress will have achieved grades A – E in at least 3 subjects. Even when a student does not meet this criterion, his options are to leave school or to negotiate the chance to repeat Year 13 with the Headmaster and the Academic Vice-Principal. These discussions will take into account his record in terms of behaviour and commitment to academic work in the previous year. Even when a student has a reasonable case for repeating the year, his request may be turned down because of the numbers qualifying for places in Year 13 on the strength of their GCSE grades or pressure of numbers on classes in subjects that he may want to study.

When a request that a student repeat the year has been upheld, however, it may be possible for him to bank a subject in which he has achieved a good AS grade and take up a new AS subject.

Subjects on offer

Most students will take 3 A2 subjects in Year 14, from the following: Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Technology, English Literature, Drama and Theatre Studies, French, German, Spanish, Art, Music, Business Studies, ICT, Politics, Physical Education and Religious Education.

Learning for life and Work remains a compulsory subject, delivered in one period per week. Most students will take 2 periods of Games but this is optional in Year 14, when some students have an opportunity of following a community action programme. Subjects continue to be taught in 9 periods per week, apart from Further Mathematics which is taught in 12. Most students then have 15 non-contact periods per week and these are split between supervised study and leisure periods. The granting of leisure periods in Year 14 is one way to ensure a gradation of privileges between Year 13 and Year 14 as well providing opportunities to develop social skills and skills of time-management.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The practical framework of the curriculum counts for very little in the education of young people without dynamic and well-organised teaching and the forging of strong relationships within classrooms, grounded in tolerance and mutual respect.

To that end the school strives towards excellent teaching based on the principles and practice outlined below:

Relationships

The school aims to create a culture of positive relations between pupils and staff by ensuring that:

- teachers talk positively to and about students;
- teachers respond to oral and written communication in a way that identifies strengths but also provides clear guidance for improvement;
- teachers recognise different learning styles - oral, visual, kinaesthetic - and plan and deliver lessons in ways that enable all pupils to learn effectively;
- firm and consistent discipline is exercised, so that similar standards of work and behaviour are applied within departments and across departments;
- teachers use the behaviour management system on SIMS consistently.

Environment

The environment in which pupils learn should be as welcoming and stimulating as possible, via:

- classroom displays that celebrate current work and which are regularly changed;
- corridor displays that celebrate current work and which are regularly changed;
- publication of pupils' work on the school website.

Teaching strategies

Teachers should aim for the highest possible quality of learning through the following strategies:

- a variety of approaches in class that combines teacher exposition, whole class discussion, group work, ICT;
- imaginative use of ICT to reinforce learning, for example, through the development of information literacy;
- rigorous questioning that uses closed and open-ended questions;
- clear, practical objectives communicated at the beginning of lessons;
- key learning reinforced at the end of lessons;
- planning towards and providing opportunities for the development of thinking skills and personal capabilities;
- planning towards and providing opportunities for the wider implementation of LLW within lessons, through awareness of the need to develop pupils as persons, as citizens and as contributors to the economy;
- assessment of work carried out in line with the school's Assessment Policy;
- encouraging pupils to use a variety of written forms to consolidate understanding – notes, mind maps, diagrams, essays;
- ensuring that all four facets of literacy – talking, listening, reading and writing – are developed within all subjects in the curriculum;

- a willingness to use self-evaluation, at a personal, departmental or whole-school level, to inform the planning and delivery of lessons – for instance, findings from the sub-group report on pupil motivation (Summer Term 2009);
- a willingness to use the expertise of outside agencies to inform the planning and delivery of lessons – for instance the Forward Thinking Project (Christmas Term 2009);
- an awareness of academic targets in the school development plan and consistent work towards achieving these targets, for instance via departmental action plans;
- an awareness of external evaluation of the work of the school that can inform teaching and learning across the curriculum, for instance key findings of the ETI reports on Geography and History, December 2009
- an awareness of pupils with special educational needs and their IEP targets, alongside pupil-centred planning and classroom approaches to help them reach their targets;
- all teachers having a thorough knowledge of examination specifications and the assessment objectives of papers for which they are preparing pupils;
- steady focus on examination technique from year 8 onwards;
- planning and delivery of lessons to classes in Years 11 – 14 that is informed by recent examiners’ and coursework moderators’ reports;
- sensitive and challenging target setting, based on Yellis data in Years 11 and 12 and on chances graphs drawn from boys’ average GCSE performance in Northern Ireland in Years 13 and 14;
- a culture that commends and encourages pupils who produce their best and that does not tolerate anything less than their best.

A learning culture

The school recognises that all the above strategies will be most effective when a culture prevails in which staff discuss teaching and learning openly and regularly. This will be encouraged via:

- PRSD;
- observation of beginning teachers and EPD teachers;
- discussions by sub-groups of Heads of Departments tracking the School Development Plan and the sharing of minutes from these meetings;
- issues connected with teaching and learning as agenda items at all departmental meetings.

LITERACY

Rationale and Background

Bangor Grammar School has always been conscious of the importance of developing high levels of literacy to enable pupils to gain full access to the learning curriculum. The recent DENI *Every School a Good School – A strategy for raising achievement in literacy and numeracy* (June 2008), which was a response to DENI circular 2007/11,

has placed a new emphasis on the promotion of literacy in schools. Underpinning this document is the view that language is the central means through which learning can be achieved. To be successful learners, therefore, pupils will need opportunities to engage in a number of language experiences across the curriculum.

The SEELB policy document of 200/2001 is more explicit about how subject teachers should contribute to pupils' ability to use language in different contexts. The underlying messages are:

- Enhancing pupils' language development enhances their subject learning.
- Subjects can make a specific contribution to pupils' language development through teaching the appropriate subject specific vocabulary.
- All teaching contributes to pupils' language development since speaking, listening, writing and reading are to varying degrees integral to all lessons.

The QCA document Language for Learning at Key Stage 3 (January 2000) summarises the essential literacy requirements for effective learning in all subjects as follows:

- Pupils should be taught in all subjects to express themselves correctly and appropriately and to read accurately and with understanding. Since standard English, spoken and written, is the predominant language in which knowledge and skills are taught and learned, pupils should be taught to recognise and use standard English.
- In writing, pupils should be taught to use language precisely and cogently.
- Pupils should be taught to listen to others, and to respond and build on their ideas constructively.
- In reading, pupils should be taught strategies to help them read with understanding, to locate and use information, to follow a process or argument and summarise, and to synthesise and adapt what they learn from their reading.
- Pupils should be taught the technical and specialist vocabulary of subjects and how to use and spell these words. They should also be taught to use the patterns of language vital to understanding and expression in different subjects. These include the construction of sentences, paragraphs and texts which are often used in a subject, e.g. language to express causality, chronology, logic, exploration, hypothesis, comparison, and how to ask questions and develop argument.

The same document clearly distinguishes between the teaching of English and the teaching of language and literacy across the curriculum. While the teaching of English is the concern of the English department, literacy is the concern of all teachers. Pupils in English will be taught a vast range of reading, writing and talking and listening

skills. This is crucial to their accessing texts in other subjects. However, pupils will encounter a wide variety of writing and media forms, engage with a vast array of text types and be utilising subject specific vocabulary and technical terms which are beyond the remit and expertise of an English teacher and need to be explicitly taught by the different subject teachers.

In Key Stage 2 many pupils will have encountered a range of textual material in English, Maths, Science and other subjects and have begun to develop specific writing and reading skills suited to topic and purpose.

When pupils transfer to Key Stage 3 they need to apply these in a hugely widened context, often in up to nine or ten separate subject areas. There are increasing demands on their ability to express themselves clearly and coherently as they learn to use subject specialist terms with precision and confidence. Pupils are required to access different kinds of text - instructional, narrative, explanatory etc. - write in a huge variety of ways in different subjects and exhibit learning and express themselves cogently in subject specific, indeed often highly specialised vocabulary. These skills are developed gradually but they are literacy skills and pupils must be guided by teachers in acquiring them.

Importantly, it must be noted that a literate pupil in English will manifest different characteristics and skills from a literate science pupil. The English department is well placed to teach pupils to access a range of literary and non-literary texts and help pupils to write in a variety of forms depending on purpose, audience and context. It is not always well placed to help pupils master scientific terminology, to use this effectively to communicate their conceptual understanding and to present this in written, pictorial or graphical forms. A literate science student must be able to carry out investigative work, present analysis and evaluation of scientific data in appropriate forms. These skills will develop slowly and incrementally throughout the key stages, but it is science teachers who are best placed to import them either through modelling, direct instruction or demonstration. They are writing skills, used to achieve scientific objectives, and pupils must learn them.

In addition to understanding the broad sweep of the term literacy, it is also important to realise that the term is now a wider concept than in previous definitions. While literacy formerly included only the developing range of reading, writing and talking and listening skills necessary for pupils to maximise learning potential throughout the curriculum, it now has a wider connotation. Included in this widened concept are computer literacy, information literacy and media literacy. The acquisition of these competencies is crucial to pupils' success in a technologically-based society. The present curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to acquire these and this need is likely to increase in the future.

Literacy in Bangor Grammar School : The Present Situation

The majority of pupils who enter the school at Key Stage 3 will have achieved at least Level 4 at Key Stage 2 in English. Historically, almost all will have acquired an A or B grade in the 11+ test and, theoretically at least, will arrive with well developed literacy skills appropriate to their age.

In relation to the above, however, it must be borne in mind that research has identified a 'slip back' effect, characteristic of some pupils in Year 8, which may affect early progress in literacy at Key Stage 3. As a result, adequate literacy levels cannot be taken for granted.

With this in mind, from September 2008 the school librarian has tested Year 8 pupils reading skills using the Accelerated Reader programme. This has revealed a wide spectrum of reading ability throughout Year 8, with reading ages spanning a range from 16.06 at the upper end to 10.00 at the lower level. Almost all pupils were A/B-grade at 11+ but clearly reading levels negatively reflected these apparently consistent ability indices.

Notwithstanding these comments, achievements in literacy as measured in the KS3 tests in the past three years have been encouraging. Over 95% of pupils on average attained level 6 or higher. This pattern of excellent attainment in English continues throughout KS4; with GCSE English used as an indicator, our boys attain better grades than boys in grammar schools throughout Northern Ireland. The implications then are that our policy must be guided by the fact that, despite the reservations previously stated, we start from a reasonable base of achievement and must consolidate and build on this.

The following points summarise measures currently contributing to consolidating and improving literacy levels within the school:

1. Formation of Literacy committee, convened in February 2010 with a cross-curricular membership.
2. Timetabled library periods for all Year 8 and 9 classes.
3. Use of *Accelerated Reader* in Years 8 and 9.
4. Provision of learning support for SEN and under-achieving junior pupils.
5. Provision of *Wordbank* subject-specific spelling and vocabulary booklet to all pupils in Year 8.
6. Monitoring of Key Stage 3 English results to support underachievers.
7. Introduction of connected learning *Journalism* project for all Year 9 pupils.
8. Piloting of VLEs with other schools at junior/senior levels.
9. Encouragement of Word processing and ICT skills throughout the curriculum.
10. Use of Internet and information retrieval skills taught in Library and ICT classes.
11. Celebration and display of pupils' work throughout the school.

12. Reading Champions library scheme.
13. Entry in public poetry/creative writing competitions.
14. All junior pupils participate in week-long *Read On* event.
15. Drama as a curricular subject for all junior pupils.
16. Provision of debating, drama, film appreciation and journalism as extra-curricular activities.
17. Distribution of A level Humanities style guide to relevant senior pupils.
18. Formally assessed oral work in GCSE English.
19. Provision of specific reading shelves for senior pupils in library.

Consolidating present achievement and to improving literacy standards throughout the school

It is crucial that the school sets clear achievable objectives which will enhance literacy levels and which can be effectively implemented, monitored and developed. Thus the following goals will constitute our policy in literacy; these are objectives the school might conceivably hope to achieve in 2010/2011 to foster good practice in literacy:

- The introduction and/or updating of the general whole-school presentation and marking policies, in line with the school's Assessment Policy.
- The development and maintenance of literacy policies by all departments. These may focus on:
 - (a) Marking
 - (b) Homework
 - (c) Presentation
 - (d) Spelling/Vocabulary

They should be integrated into department schemes of work, and disseminated to pupils so that they clearly know what is expected of them.

- All departments should seek to clarify the literacy requirements appropriate to their subject and outline strategies for implementing these in their schemes of work.
- The GL baseline/diagnostic testing in English of Year 8 intake will be introduced. This will be supplemented by testing of Years 9 and 10 to provide longitudinal profiles of pupils' achievements through Key Stage 3. This may be used to facilitate diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses, identify where support teaching is required and measure value added.
- Other departments should review their methods of monitoring weaknesses in particular aspects of literacy among pupils and have clear stated strategies to address these. This should include pupils with recognised special needs, eg dyslexia, sight or hearing impairment, etc.
- The SMT will coordinate with the English department to provide learning support to underachieving pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 and seek means of increasing this help where time and personnel permit.
- The review of use of the Word Bank resource booklets for pupils in Key Stage 3 will be undertaken by the Literacy Committee.
- Ways of making the library more available to other departments as a valuable learning resource will be investigated. The Literacy Committee will make proposals for a whole school Information Management Policy.

- The continued use of ICT to reinforce good presentation; improve secretarial aspects of writing and raise self-esteem and standards among the boys will be encouraged across the curriculum.
- Ways of celebrating writing through wall displays, handouts, online posts or other appropriate formats will be investigated.
- In consultation with the AVP/SMT, the progress of the Literacy Committee in the above areas will be monitored. Future priorities and needs will be discussed, and identified in the light of guidance and initiatives from SEELB and DENI.

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by SMT and amended in the light of evidence of changing needs of pupils', research within the wider educational community and statutory requirements.

NUMERACY

Rationale

Bangor Grammar School is committed to raising the standards of numeracy of all of its students. We seek to develop the ability in our pupils to use numeracy skills effectively in all areas of the curriculum and to equip them with the skills necessary to cope confidently with the demands of further education, employment and adult life.

Current Definition of Numeracy

Numeracy is a proficiency which is developed mainly in mathematics but also in other subjects. It is more than an ability to do basic arithmetic. It involves developing confidence and competence with numbers and measures. It requires understanding of the number system, a repertoire of mathematical techniques, and an inclination and ability to solve quantitative or spatial problems in a range of contexts. Numeracy also demands understanding of the ways in which data are gathered by counting and measuring, and presented in graphs, diagrams, charts and tables.

(Framework for Teaching Mathematics — DfES)

Aim and Objectives

The central aim of the policy is for each pupil to further develop mathematical skills through their application in all areas of the curriculum in order to promote better learning and to raise standards. This will be achieved through consistency of practice, realised via the following objectives:

- to increase pupils' awareness and use of the different calculation strategies including standard written methods and the appropriate use of a calculator;

- to help pupils to develop their thinking and reasoning skills by providing greater opportunities for problem solving;
- to support pupils with the handling, analysis and interpretation of information, including numerical data;
- to promote consistently high expectations of neatness and accuracy in drawing and measurement work.

Implementation of the Numeracy Policy

The Mathematical Association recommends that teachers of Mathematics and teachers of other subjects co-operate on agreed strategies.

In particular that:

Teachers of mathematics should:

- be aware of the mathematical techniques used in other subjects and provide assistance and advice to other departments, so that a correct and consistent approach is used in all subjects;
- provide information to other subject teachers on appropriate expectations of pupils and difficulties likely to be experienced in various age and ability groups;
- through liaison with other teachers, attempt to ensure that students have appropriate numeracy skills by the time they are needed for work in other subject areas;
- seek opportunities to use topics and examination questions from other subjects in mathematics lessons.

Teachers of subjects other than mathematics should:

- ensure that they are familiar with correct mathematical language, notation, conventions and techniques, relating to their own subject, and encourage students to use these correctly.
- be aware of appropriate expectations of students and difficulties that might be experienced with numeracy skills.
- provide information for mathematics teachers on the stage at which specific numeracy skills will be required for particular groups.
- provide resources for mathematics teachers to enable them to use examples of applications of numeracy relating to other subjects in mathematics lessons

The Numeracy Policy is a working document. It provides guidance to staff on the key areas identified in the objectives.

All staff should aim to support the development of numeracy skills by maximising opportunities for mathematics-related activities to take place in relevant lessons.

Each department will nominate a ‘mathematics link teacher’. When required, these will provide advice on mathematical content of their curriculum areas, through consultation with the Mathematics Department.

Each department will receive a file containing guidance on various aspects of teaching mathematics.

SMT will review, monitor and assess the implementation of this policy annually.