



# ASSUMPTION GRAMMAR SCHOOL



## CURRICULUM POLICY

*Revised November 2013*

## **Curriculum Policy in Assumption Grammar School** *(Specialist School for Music with PE as contributory subject)*

The school offers a range of subjects over and above the statutory requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and lays particular emphasis on the pastoral dimension in the curriculum.

Our Curriculum reflects the Department of Education's Quality Indicators:

*A school culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists - with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability.*  
*Every School A Good School (DENI)*

The school curriculum fosters the ethos of "Fully Alive". Through the planning and implementation of the curriculum, each student is encouraged to reach her potential and nurture her own particular talents and abilities. Teaching is organised through academic areas led by Heads of Department and Co-ordinators. Schemes of work which comply with current statutory regulations are also designed to ensure a breadth and depth of knowledge, a zest for learning and the development of skills and values necessary for life. There is a culture of self evaluation within all departments which ensures that they remain responsive to changes in education and open to the individual needs of pupils.

Our school building and facilities allow both curricular and extra-curricular learning to take place in a twenty-first century environment where students benefit from excellent facilities and emerging technologies. The school holds Specialist Status in Music with PE. The core aim of our school is "To develop the whole person through a Christian Education" and as a specialist school we have been able to foster our ethos, maintain our exceptional academic standards and share our excellence all areas.

Our aim is to empower our pupils to achieve the very best of which they are capable, by enabling them to develop as individuals and as contributors to society, the economy and the environment.

Pupils with identified Special Educational Needs are supported and provided for in school in order that they can fulfil their potential. In addition, the school assists those who are experiencing difficulties with their studies through our Academic and Pastoral Tutoring/Mentoring schemes.

The cross-curricular skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT are developed across the curriculum. Opportunities to develop Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities are embedded in the schemes of work of each subject area. Emphasis is placed on transferring, applying and using these skills effectively.

## AREAS OF STUDY

### **Key Stage 3 (Years 8, 9 and 10)**

#### **The Arts**

Art and Design  
Drama  
Music

#### **Language & Literacy**

English

#### **Mathematics & Numeracy**

Mathematics  
including Financial Capability

#### **Modern Languages**

French  
Irish  
Spanish

#### **Environment & Society**

History  
Geography

#### **Science & Technology**

Technology and Design  
Science

#### **Learning for Life & Work**

Home Economics  
Personal Development  
Citizenship  
Employability

#### **Physical Education**

Physical Education

#### **Religious Education**

Religious Education

Although aspects of Learning for Life and Work (LLW) are addressed through the Areas of Study, the school delivers Personal Development (RSE), Home Economics, Local and Global Citizenship and Education for Employability as discrete areas. *(Citizenship in Year 8 is delivered within Religion)*

ICT and Latin are still delivered as part of our KS3 provision.

The pupils are also trained in Library Skills by a qualified Librarian.

### **Languages at Key Stage 3**

**Year 8** pupils study French, Latin and Spanish.

*(Pupils who have come from a bunscoil study Irish in Year 8 instead of Latin)*

**Year 9** pupils study Irish and choose 2 languages from French, Latin and Spanish.

**Year 10** pupils opt for 2 of the languages they studied in Year 9.

### **Music at Key Stage 3**

**Year 8 and Year 9** pupils have a weekly choral singing class in addition to their music lesson.

Peripatetic teachers tutor pupils in a wide range of instruments, including brass, woodwind, strings and percussion. Lessons in voice training are also available.

At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are awarded a certificate based on their attainment in their summative examinations in June.

### **Key Stage 4 (Years 11 and 12)**

In their final year of Key Stage 3, pupils choose an individual package of subjects which enables them to develop their particular strengths and opens to them a wide range of career options. An increasing number of Key Stage 4 students are taking 11 or 12 GCSEs by availing of early morning or after school classes. Music and Technology are offered as early morning GCSEs and Statistics as an after school option. GCSE Latin can be completed at the end of Year 11, enabling pupils to study an extra GCSE in Year 12.

Through its Key Stage 4 curriculum, the school offers pupils a very wide choice of subjects for GCSE; 28 subjects are currently offered.

The subjects offered at Key Stage 4 are:

#### **Core Subjects (Compulsory)**

Religious Education  
English Language  
English Literature  
Mathematics

All students study these Core Subjects. In addition, they are obliged to study:

|                                   |                            |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Science:</b>                   | <i>Either</i>              | Double Science Award (2 GCSEs)      |
|                                   | <i>or all 3 of</i>         | Physics<br>Chemistry<br>Biology     |
|                                   | <i>or a combination of</i> | Biology with Health and Social Care |
| <b>Environment &amp; Society:</b> | <i>Either</i>              | History                             |
|                                   | <i>or</i>                  | Geography                           |
| <b>Languages:</b>                 | <i>Either</i>              | Irish                               |
|                                   | <i>or</i>                  | Spanish                             |
|                                   | <i>or</i>                  | French                              |

Students may study both History and Geography and more than one language.

Most students study 10 GCSE subjects, (with some taking 11 or 12) composed of the requirements listed above and a choice of 1 or 2 from the following optional list:

- Additional Maths
- Art and Design
- Business Studies
- Drama
- Health and Social Care
- Home Economics

- Information and Communications Technology
- Journalism
- Music
- PE
- Technology and Design
- Latin
- Law
- Learning for Life and Work
- Statistics

Assessment at Key Stage 4 is through GCSE examinations.

All students take non-examination courses in Relationships and Sexuality Education, Citizenship and Careers.

Key Stage 4 pupils have two periods of Physical Education each week.

### ***Sixth Form (Years 13 and 14)***

Pupils wishing to enter the Sixth Form must meet the published entry criteria. They are interviewed, and in the light of their career plans, advised on courses of study.

A range of 29 subjects is available for AS and A2 level.

### **Subjects Offered**

|                    |                                 |                  |                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Art & Design       | Biology                         | Business Studies | Applied Business      |
| Applied ICT        | Chemistry                       | Economics        | English Literature    |
| French             | Further Mathematics             | Geography        | Health & Social Care  |
| History            | History and Appreciation of Art | Home Economics   | ICT                   |
| Irish              | Latin                           | Mathematics      | Music                 |
| Physical Education | Physics                         | Psychology       | Government & Politics |
| Religious Studies  | Spanish                         | Sociology        | Technology & Design   |
| Theatre Studies    |                                 |                  |                       |

Most students study 4 AS levels in Year 13. The majority of Year 14 students discontinue one AS level and continue with 3 at A2 level.

Year 13 and 14 pupils follow a General Religion programme two periods a week.

In keeping with the school's commitment to providing a broad and relevant academic experience for Sixth Form students, we offer an Enrichment Programme in Year 13. These pupils may choose from the following: Survival Cooking, Leisure Studies, First Aid, Young Enterprise and ASPIRE (Leadership).

Additional Maths is offered in the Enrichment Programme to assist those students who opt for AS Maths and have not studied Additional Maths.

COPE (Certificate of Personal Effectiveness) at Level 3 which can secure 70 UCAS points is also offered during enrichment time. Students who study COPE also achieve a Certificate in European Studies.

A range of Leisure Activities is offered to Sixth Form pupils by the PE Department including aerobics, bowling, fitness training, horse riding, ice skating, squash and swimming.

### ***Leadership***

Two periods per week are devoted to Leadership/Careers. These sessions are intended to prepare the pupils for positions of responsibility and for life after school. Guest speakers from various professions are invited to address the pupils.

### ***Area Learning Community***

The school is a member of the Ballynahinch Learning Community and delivers a wide range of Post 16 subjects to students from partner schools. GCSE Music is also delivered to partner schools who wish to avail of this.

The school currently meets the requirements for full implementation of the Entitlement Framework as required by the Education Order 2006.

### **Information and Complaints Relating to the Curriculum**

If parents have a query or concern regarding curricular provision, they should contact the Vice Principal for Curriculum who will look into the matter. If the issue is not resolved, they may contact the Principal. If necessary, the matter may be referred to the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Governors.

This policy has been agreed and formally adopted by the Board of Governors of Assumption Grammar School.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Chairperson of the Board of Governors)*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Principal)*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_