

BISHOP JUSTUS

Aiming for Excellence: An ethos that places academic knowledge and creative excellence at the heart of learning.



Welcome to our Aiming for Excellence programme.

Introduction

We are the only Secondary Church of England comprehensive school in Bromley and offer a distinctive educational ethos based on a Christian foundation. Our strong pastoral commitment ensures that every student is known individually and reaches his or her potential within the context of a caring Christian community. Whilst we provide a high quality education for all our students irrespective of their starting points, we understand the need to foster a culture of academic excellence: we aim high for all students and support them in achieving. We hope that this creates a culture of vision, aspiration and excellent effort for *all* our students.

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum will be over three years, and is formed of two equal curriculum strands: Bishop and Justus. Students will be taught initially in mixed ability groupings for all subjects. We believe that this will allow all students to excel and demonstrate their developing knowledge in each discipline, with the appropriate level of challenge and support fine-tuned for them by the teacher. Developing subject knowledge and being able to transfer and apply this to ever-increasingly challenging concepts is at the heart of each subject area – and this will be reflected in ability setting as and when Subject Leaders feel it is appropriate for the students. Students will begin studying most of their GCSE courses in Year 10 and are set for English, Maths, Science and Religious Education. Setting will be reviewed frequently based upon academic performance in assessments.

Staff work together at Bishop Justus to explore the connections between each subject discipline. As our students progress through the key stages we support them in making the right choices regarding subjects to study, university applications and comprehensive career guidance.

With all this in mind we have put together an outline of some of the activities that take place throughout the academic year that support academic and creative excellence, whilst recognising the cultural, spiritual and social aspects of learning, in a range of fields.

Our aim is:

- **to provide all students with the opportunities to develop and foster their talents.**
- **to provide students opportunities to explore the very best of what has been written and said in each discipline.**

Curriculum

Bishop Justus Church of England School believes in offering every child an exciting and broad curriculum experience regardless of their start point or background. We believe in the power of deep knowledge to enable all children to flourish now, to live a good life and to make a confident and positive contribution in the communities to which they belong now and in the future.

Each subject area treasures its core knowledge and seeks to deliver this in ways that allow children to discover in real depth the very best of what has been thought and said both in western culture and across the globe and to use this knowledge to question, challenge, collaborate and communicate with skill and mastery. Access to this core knowledge is the

right of all children so teachers work hard to ensure that children are able to recall knowledge over time and are able to use it to respond wisely to questioning or argument or to discover new knowledge.

We do this in the confident understanding that embedding knowledge within long term memory will allow our students to focus their working memories more fully on learning, creating and problem solving. We contend that the recent trend for over reliance on technology as a substitute for knowledge is an illusion which does not serve children well, or equip them for the rigours of study and working life.

We understand fully the importance of being word rich and believe that access to the morphology and etymology of vocabulary must not be the sole domain of those deemed most or more able; that alongside wider access to subjects such as Classics or Latin, a deeper knowledge of the word history of subject specific and general vocabulary is the right of all children, and the responsibility of all teachers to teach explicitly.

We aim to provide a curriculum that promotes a sense of confidence, independence, and creativity. This is to ensure access to sport, the theatre, the British countryside and coast, experiences of historic sites at home and abroad and to higher education providers. We know this will broaden the horizons of our students.

School Ethos

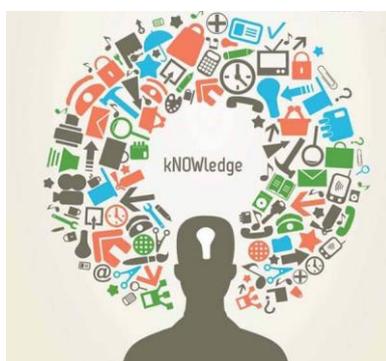
We want our students to have a strong character and be aspirational. The virtues we hope to nurture in our students are many, but in particular these: faith, hope, love, wisdom, courage and kindness. Of all our virtues, we emphasise the virtue of love; a love that is perfectly exemplified through the words and actions of Jesus Christ. We want to develop our students to be hard-working and thoughtful individuals who care for themselves and others. Rigorous academic skills and a strong work ethic need to go hand in hand with compassion and empathy in the character of a Bishop Justus student. We base our virtues on Christian teachings from the Bible. These virtues are shared human values that can be embraced by all, whether religious or not. Students will develop and strengthen their character through their journey together at Bishop Justus, so that when they leave, they do so as young adults equipped with Christian virtues that will support them for life. They will have received an education that has nurtured them into becoming well-rounded individuals that have strong characters which enable them to live 'life in all its fullness.' (Matthew 25:14-30)



"HAVE LIFE IN ALL
ITS FULLNESS"

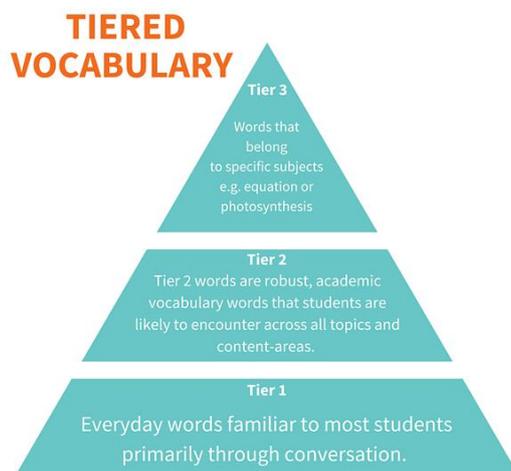
Knowledge Rich

Powerful knowledge is at the heart of the curriculum. Knowledge is a shared foundation for equality and is needed to understand and interpret the world. Our subject specialists are the heart of the curriculum. Each subject sets out their curriculum vision and maps out a clear knowledge pathway all the way from year 7 to year 13. We work closely with our partnership primaries in the Aquinas Trust to ensure that we are developing their prior knowledge and moving their learning forward: not just for exams but to foster curiosity, develop independence and think critically. Choosing what to teach is carefully balanced and reviewed so that students can understand the best of what has been written, thought and created today, in the past and from around the world. We help students to see the links between different subjects, but at key stage three we run special 'knowledge' lessons to further this and explore some ideas beyond the realms of the subject curriculum such as philosophy.



Vocabulary

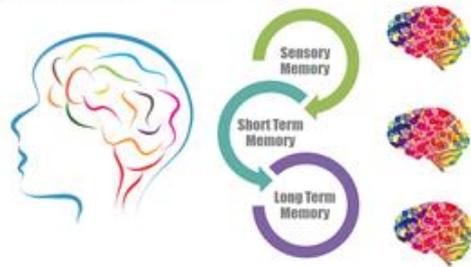
A rich vocabulary supports learning about the world, encountering new ideas and enjoying the beauty of language. A rich vocabulary helps us to express our ideas in both as we discuss learning and as we write for learning and for final assessments. Vocabulary is explicitly taught, so that students can access challenging texts, further their comprehension and build up their own word hoard. We teach the synonyms, antonyms, semantic meaning and the etymology of words (where they come from), and morphology (how words are structured). This helps students to see patterns and varied applications, for example if you know *dec-* means 10, you can begin to understand words like decimate, decibel, decade etc. Naturally we also teach subject specific terminology in context.



The Power of Memory

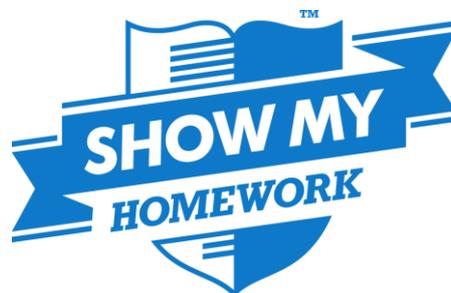
Daniel Willingham (a professor in education) writes that ‘Memory is the residue of thought.’ He argues that thinking itself is challenging and therefore we need to rely upon our long term memory to be able to apply knowledge to new learning. Teachers at Bishop Justus are interested in the latest thinking about learning including cognitive science – how we learn and how we remember. This is important as we are not just after our students cramming and passing a final exam, but being life-long learners with the skills required firstly to revise well, but also interrogate this knowledge, question it, link it and apply it. Students are quizzed regularly – this is not a test but an opportunity for students to review and reflect on their own gaps in knowledge. Lastly we hope that students we be able to continue to grow and develop their knowledge of the world, beyond the classroom. Students are taught specific revision strategies and held accountable for their own learning, so that they can accelerate their learning and they can enter exams feeling confident. Hirsch describes knowledge like Velcro – it catches hold of new ideas and makes them stick.

3 Types of Working Memory



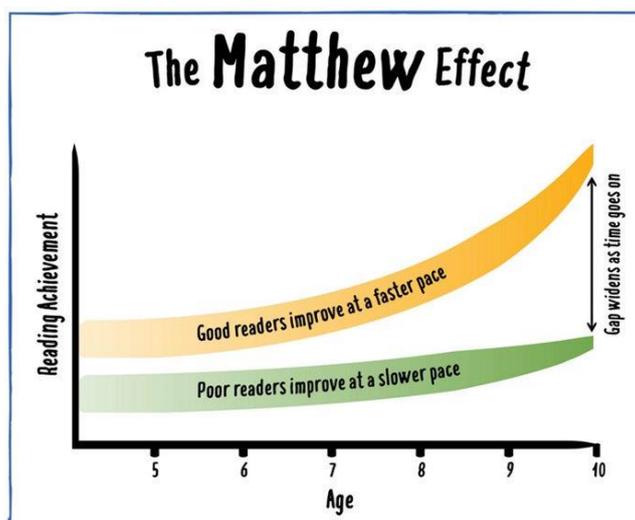
Homework

Homework is a valuable connection point between home and school and we hope that it gives you opportunities to discuss and share your child’s learning. Homework fosters independence, resilience, and allows students the time and space to apply or review their learning. In line with our work on knowledge and vocabulary, homework may often be specific revision tasks, pre-reading or vocabulary tasks. We use the website ShowMyHomework to set and monitor homework. We can attach resources and links or simply set a quiz or spelling test with instant results. ShowMyHomework allows parents and carers to monitor and review homework and encourages a discussion about learning together, beyond the classroom.



Reading

It is really important that students continue to read widely. Evidence suggests that students who read for pleasure make accelerated progress. Our school library is amazing and has a wonder of classics, new titles and popular literature. We regularly provide students with whole class readers, (in addition to their own choices); and our Eager Reader programme encourages students to discuss and reflect on these books together. The library is open before and after school and at break times as a pleasant place to read and study.



Learning Beyond the Classroom

Knowing that much learning takes place beyond the classroom, we also run a range of residential and day trips.

These vary each year, but we have organised trips in the past to:

- Sorrento, Italy
- Iceland
- Snowdonia, Wales
- The National Maritime Museum
- The Museum of London
- Ski trips
- Berlin
- Camber Sands
- Ypres
- Madrid
- The Globe Theatre
- London



Co-Curricular Opportunities

We run many special events and activities throughout the year, (in addition to our weekly clubs and co-curricular activities such as sports clubs, art clubs, book clubs, drama clubs and music clubs). Some of these additional activities are specific groups of talented students in sporting, creative or academic disciplines, but most are available to all students, as we believe that everyone should be given the opportunities to develop their gifts. In September all year 7 students are given the opportunity to find out about these, and to sign up at our 'Fresher's Fair'. By providing these opportunities we are aware that students develop their skills at different times and in a range of ways. See the website for further details.

Here is a flavour of some these activities:

Subject	Activity	Details	Year Groups
Art	Annual Art Exhibition	Various	All
Business & Economics	3,000 word Essay Writing competition	Competition for the Young Economist of the Year	12, 13
Business & Economics	Mayor's Entrepreneur Awards	Presentation of new business ventures	12, 13
Business & Economics	Coca Cola Business Challenge	Marketing competition	All
Chemistry	Salters' Festival of Chemistry	Practical based competitions followed by lectures at university	7,8,9
Dance	RAD Step Into Dance	Auditions required	7, 8 and 9
Drama	School Production	Once a year. Auditions required.	All
English	Extended Reading List	Texts linked to areas of study	All
English	Speak Up Speak Out Challenge	1 day workshop and competition	10
English	Poetry Slam	Poet Laureates working with Aquinas primary schools	All
English	Shakespeare workshops at The Globe Theatre	1 day workshop	11
English	Theatre Trips	Range of performances. Ticket only.	10,11,12 and 13
English	Poetry Live Conference	1 day conference	11
English	Love Through the Ages Conference	1 day conference at UCL	12 and 13
History	Debating Club	Regional and national competitions	All
Media	School Magazine	Produced three times a year. Written and edited by students.	All
Music	Wide Range of clubs	See Music department	All
Music	Platform Concert	Auditions required	All
PE	Various competitions and regional sporting events	Various	All

Physics	Imperial College Lectures	Open days and lectures	10,11, 12, 12
Religious Studies	Philosophy 4 Children facilitators	Selected students to work in Aquinas primary schools	10,11 and 12
Science	STEMettes/STEM in day	Engaging female scientists in the areas of science, technology, engineering and maths. A day event competing against another school to create something	9 girls

We hope that your child enjoys their time at Bishop Justus and embraces the many opportunities to find and develop all their talents.

Bishop Justus is a member of **NACE** (The National Association for Able Children in Education)

