



WESTMINSTER UNDER SCHOOL

Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Policy

This policy applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Written by:	TSL/GPF
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Summary of changes:	<p>4.5 – Updates to Entry Points and Outline Curriculum, taking into account the opening of our new Pre-Prep, beginning with the Reception cohort, in September 2026, and the removal of 8+ as an entry point. Updates to the Year 8 curriculum information, taking into account changes to Westminster School’s Challenge examination, as of 2026 – 2027. Addition of Preparation for 7+ section, for those pupils who may warrant this in the Pre-Prep. Update to the Preparation for Senior Schools section, with the removal of historic information about Westminster School’s Challenge examination. Updates to the CPD section, and the monitoring of teaching and learning section. Minor changes to the ‘Other related events’ section. Insertion of revised Presentation Policy.</p>
Approved by:	Education Committee
Related policies:	<p>Assessment, Marking, Recording and Reporting Policy Admissions Policy SEND Policy Careers Policy Policy on English as an Additional Language Staff Handbook (The Presentation of Work Policy and Homework Policy are appendices to this policy)</p>

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Person(s) in charge of review:	Assistant Master, Teaching and Learning Assistant Master, Academic

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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 future and senior school examination requirements. In the Lower School (Reception to Year 4), lessons are, in the main, taught by generalist teachers, though some subjects, such as French, Art, Computing, Drama, PE, and Music are delivered by subject specialists. In the Upper School, (Years 5 to 8), lessons are taught by subject specialists, and this provides our pupils 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 pupils 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 test and exam requirements;
- be open-minded and enthusiastic in our teaching, encouraging our pupils to question and assisting them in forming and articulating their own ideas;
- build on the pupils' intellectual curiosity and stimulate an enjoyment of learning, analysis and scholarship;
- praise the pupils' efforts and progress wherever possible;
- give constructive support, adapting teaching where considered necessary in order to ensure that all pupils are able to access learning and achieve desirable outcomes;
- 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 collaboration, for example through team and group work as well as independent work.

Teaching staff at Westminster Under School are encouraged to reflect on their classroom practice and to maintain an interest in current research and trends in pedagogy.

Entry Points and Outline Curriculum

Reception

Up to thirty-two children are selected following 4+ assessments. They form two classes of sixteen pupils each in Reception.

We have applied to the Department for Education for exemption from the Learning and Development and Assessment requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory framework.

In Reception, pupils are taught the core curriculum, where possible, by their form teacher: Phonics, English, Maths, and PSED (Personal, Social, and Emotional Development sessions). There are specialist lessons for French, Music, Drama, PE and Games, and these are taught by subject specialists. Reception children also attend Library sessions. Outside of this, pupils benefit from a range of free-flow activities, promoting skills in child-led play and fostering autonomy.

Year 1 and 2

The thirty-two children in Reception move up to Year 1, and those Year 1 children move up to Year 2.

In Year 1 and 2, pupils 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, TPR, Computing, PE and Games.

Years 3 and 4

The majority of our Year 2 cohort progress to Year 3, following in-class formative assessment and tracking of pupil progress during the Pre-Prep phase. Up to twenty-eight additional pupils are selected following examination for entry into Year 3.

In Years 3 and 4, pupils 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, TPR, Computing, PE, and Games.

Years 5 and 6

In Years 5 and 6, there are specialist teachers for all subjects: English, Mathematics, Science, French, History, Geography, TPR, PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education), Art, Computing, Drama, Music, PE, and Games. In Year 6, pupils are also introduced to Latin.

Year 7

Up to forty-four pupils (up to twenty-eight from 2030) are selected following examination for entry into Year 7 at age 11+ and they join those pupils coming through from Year 6. The new pupils may not have studied French or Latin and may be behind existing pupils in other subject areas. Saturday morning classes, which run from March until June, prior to entry, enable these pupils to begin to catch up with their peers before joining the Under School. Year 7 pupils are placed in mixed forms for registration and the majority of subject-based teaching, including PSHE, but are separated into 'old pupils' and 'new pupils' for teaching in French and Latin, in order to accommodate the need to differentiate, according to the levels at which the 'new pupils'

join us in the Languages. In Mathematics, the pupils are placed in four groups according to ability. There are specialist teachers for all subjects: English, Mathematics, Science, French, Latin, History, Geography, TPR, PSHE, Art, Computing, Drama, Music, PE, and Games.

Year 8

In Year 8, the pupils are divided into four mixed forms for registration and pastoral care.

As of September 2026, all Year 8 pupils are taught in four mixed-ability teaching groups, apart from Maths and Languages, which will continue to be set. Pupils are taught to an equal level across these mixed-ability groups, in readiness for them sitting the Challenge examinations set by Westminster School. These examinations are sat at Westminster in the Election term of Year 8. Pupils take a set of core papers in: English, French, General (e.g. logic, problem-solving), Humanities (History and Geography), Latin, Maths, and Science. All core papers are 60 minutes in length; the Science paper is 120 minutes long. In addition, pupils select two extension / optional papers from the following: Arts and Drama, Classics / Greek, English, French Oral, Humanities (Philosophy and Theology), Linguistics and Languages, Maths, and Science Practical.

High achievers could potentially be offered the King's Scholarship, with boarding in College expected of these pupils. For those high achievers who opt to be day pupils at Westminster, a Head Master's Award is potentially offered. Subject awards are also available to those who may achieve a best performance in certain subjects, and these are presented to the pupils when they begin their Westminster School careers. For those pupils who transfer from the Under School to Westminster School at the end of Year 8, a pupil's performance in the Westminster Challenge examinations does not have a bearing on the unconditional offer that they will receive in Year 6; the data gleaned from the Challenge examinations is used by Westminster School for benchmarking / baseline purposes for their Year 9 (Fifth Form) cohort, upon entry to School.

For those pupils who opt for other senior schools, such as Eton, additional provision is made during the Lent and Election terms of Year 8 in order to prepare them for the specific requirements of the examinations for these schools – e.g. for Eton, ISEB 13+ Common Entrance or the King's Scholarship papers. This additional provision takes the form of lunchtime and / or after school preparation sessions.

For Maths and Languages (French, Latin, and Greek), the pupils are in sets, named **Arnold, Benn, Gielgud, and Wesley**.

Arnold and **Gielgud** are parallel groups who follow a curriculum which is typically pitched above the demands of the ISEB 13+ Common Entrance curriculum. Pupils in **Wesley and Benn** tend to be capable of working at the requisite level for scholarship awards at senior schools. Pupils across all four groups are taught to a level through which they can feel confident in tackling the Westminster Challenge papers in Maths and Languages that is appropriate to their abilities, should Westminster be their favoured senior school. Pupils in Wesley, and some pupils in Benn,

also work to a requisite level of the scholarship papers in Maths and Languages for entry to other senior schools. Where Maths and Languages setting is concerned, pupils may be moved between the groups, typically during the Play term of Year 8, if teaching staff feel a move is appropriate to match a pupil's academic profile, but this is rare, as a great deal of time is spent on ensuring that our grouping decisions for each pupil, once they reach the end of the Election term of Year 7, are the right ones.

We would generally expect pupils who are considered suitable for scholarship awards at senior schools, such as the King's Scholarship award via the Westminster Challenge route, or the Eton King's Scholarship awards, to be placed in Benn or Wesley for Maths and Languages..

Greek is added to the curriculum in Year 8, alongside Latin.

All pupils have a weekly PSHE lesson. Pupils are also offered guidance on study skills through Form Teachers and subject teachers; there is a particular focus on study skills during Year 7, with sessions run by Elevate Education.

All pupils in Years 7 and 8 receive age-appropriate Careers Advice which is delivered through a variety of platforms, including visiting speakers, PSHE lessons and the Year 8 post-exam programme. A "Futures Friday" programme of assemblies runs each year for Years 7 and 8, with visiting speakers including WUS parents and former pupils. In addition, WUS parents and other external agencies are involved in our annual Careers Fair for Year 8 pupils.

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

Preparation for 7+

The vast majority of our pupils in Year 2 are expected to make very good progress and transfer to Year 3 without issue. Progress is determined by the Pre-Prep class teachers, and the continuing formative assessment that takes place as part of the curriculum. Where it is felt that a pupil in the Pre-Prep may be better suited to an alternative preparatory school at the 7+ point, the School will liaise with the pupil's parents during the course of Year 1, advising and supporting the family in considering other preparatory schools. For these pupils, a focus on Maths, English, and reasoning skills during Year 1 and Year 2, will mean that they are prepared to sit the 7+ examination at other preparatory schools.

Preparation for Senior Schools

Pupils are prepared for entry to senior schools in Year 6 according to the requirements set by those schools. Entry to Westminster School is subject to satisfactory performance in Year 6 in the ISEB Common Pre-Tests, written tests in English and Maths, set by Westminster School, and interview performance. Continuing good progress in Years 7 and 8, including a satisfactory performance in the Year 8 Challenge examinations, is also expected. The vast majority of pupils in Year 8 transfer to Westminster School; all pupils entering at 11+ are expected to transfer to Westminster School. Each year, a small number of Year 8 pupils choose to transfer to other senior schools.

Teachers liaise regularly with colleagues at Westminster School to ensure a seamless transition between the Schools for the vast majority of Year 8 pupils who opt for Westminster.

Pupils who may not have been offered an unconditional place for Westminster School following the Year 6 transfer testing will be prepared fully for ISEB 13+ Common Entrance, or other entrance exams that may be required of their alternative senior schools

In common with Year 6, during the phase of ISEB Pre-Tests, and written tests, Year 8 pupils are strongly encouraged to continue to partake fully in all the extra-curricular activities on offer, irrespective of their choice of senior school and entry route.

Please refer to the “Transfer from Westminster Under School to Westminster School” section of the Admissions Policy for further information on transfer between the two schools.

Syllabus

Parents are given details of the curriculum at the beginning of each term in the form of a Curriculum Update. These updates are posted on Aptus, the School’s Virtual Learning Environment.

Academic Planning and Oversight

The Assistant Master, Teaching and Learning, working closely 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 schemes 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. Throughout the academic year, Heads of Departments are also encouraged to liaise with their counterparts at Westminster School; meetings enable good practice to be shared and collaborative planning is fostered.

We aim for a whole school approach where high quality teaching, adapted for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND). Teachers are expected to accommodate pupils’ learning differences in order to reduce barriers to effective learning. However, where a teacher believes that a pupil may need additional support with their learning, referrals can be brought to the attention of the School’s SENCO by submitting an online form via the School’s online MIS (Management Information Service). Further details of the referral and assessment process can be found in the SEND Policy.

Presentation

Pupils are required to follow the School policy for presentation of their work which can be seen in Appendix 2. It is displayed in all classrooms and referred to by teachers regularly. If any pupil 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 SENCO and the Assistant Master (Teaching and Learning).

The Role of Homework

We are strong believers in the importance of homework for intelligent and well-motivated pupils. Homework allows pupils to demonstrate that they have a clear understanding of their academic work, it helps pupils to make strong academic progress and aids pupils and teachers in identifying areas to strengthen. Homework can be used to prepare for lessons and as a means of stretching the ablest. It can also encourage individual and independent learning, as well as foster good working habits in the pupils and an understanding of the importance of application (see the Aims of the Curriculum on page 1).

Nevertheless, we also believe strongly that homework tasks should be purposeful and achievable within the 20 – 30 minute allotted time for each task, as per the Homework Policy in Appendix 3. Teaching staff are encouraged to set homework tasks to develop and enhance what is learnt in the classroom, rather than as a separate assignment or to introduce a topic.

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

Identification of Learning Needs

All of our pupils have been selected following a rigorous selection process at 4+, 7+, or 11+.

Where a teacher believes that a pupil may have a learning need, details are recorded on a Learning Development referral form, available on our MIS system, which is acted upon by the SENCO and the Learning Development Department.

Our provision for academic support is outlined in the SEND policy.

Continued Professional Development for Teaching Staff

A whole-school Teaching and Learning focus is established at the start of each academic year, and this is revisited during Teaching and Learning meetings held at several points in the year. The Teaching and Learning meetings are a combination of compulsory, formal meetings for all teaching staff, and more informal Teaching and Learning briefings that are held weekly. Staff are invited to explore and reflect on how ideas from educational research and best practice could be implemented in the classroom.

Staff are encouraged to maintain a professional dialogue with their colleagues at Westminster School, with a particular focus on teaching and learning in Key Stage 3.

Staff are strongly encouraged to participate in relevant external training and a whole-school budget is available to meet the cost of external CPD provision.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning

This takes place through learning walks, formal and informal lesson observation, particularly through the Professional Development and Review (PDR) process and through departmental review including work scrutiny. The departmental review process includes an opportunity for Heads of Department to go on learning walks with the Assistant Master, Teaching and Learning, and / or the Assistant Master, Academic, observing good practice, and identifying areas for further development. The Assistant Master, Teaching and Learning, and the Assistant Master, Academic, also run semi-regular academic pupil panels, inviting pupils to reflect on aspects of academic life at the Under School; their observations help to inform discussions and CPD with teaching staff.

Other Relevant Events

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 benefits from a compulsory residential trip as well as numerous day trips to museums, galleries, theatres, churches, temples, castles, and so on. There are also regular trips abroad during school holidays, including the Classics trip to Italy, the French trip and sports tours, Choir tours, and Geography trips..

Annual charity-themed events such as the Harvest Festival,, the Christmas Fair, and the Summer Fete are designed to raise awareness amongst the pupils of people who are less fortunate, both in the UK and abroad. All the money raised in these events is donated to a range of charities, including charities that have been researched and nominated by pupils. Pupils are also encouraged to help the local community as part of the School's Enterprise programme; older pupils are involved in regular visits to local primary schools, for example, to read with younger pupils, as well as to local care homes, to engage with elderly residents

Across any one academic year, visiting speakers will address the whole school during assemblies. Speakers have and continue to include politicians, journalists, authors, sports personalities, 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 pupils a broader perspective on life.

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Assistant Master (Teaching and Learning) who reports to the Master.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix 1 – School Curriculum

Table showing structure of the School Curriculum for the academic year 2026- 2027.

Lessons are 35 minutes in duration.

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7 – ‘Old’	Year 7 – ‘New’	Year 8	Year 8 – Wesley / Benn Maths and Languages
English (inc. Phonics and Library in Pre-Prep)	15	10	9	7	7	6	6	5	5	5	5
Maths	5	10	7.5	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5
Science	2	1	2	2	2	4	4	5.5	5.5	5	5
French	1	1	1	1	2	3	4	4	5	5	5
History	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2.5	2.5
Geography	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2.5	2.5
TPR / P4C (Pre-Prep)	2 (with PSHE)	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1
Latin							3	4	4	4	4
Greek										1	1.5
Classics						1					
Drama	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Computing				2	2	2	1	1	1	1.5	1
Art	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Music	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Games	2	2	2	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
PE (Outdoor Owls in Reception)	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	0.5	0.5	1.5	1.5
Swimming	0	0	(with PE)	2	2	2	2				
PSHE	2 (with P4C)	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Skills / Form Time (incl. Assembly in Pre-Prep)	2	6	5	1		1					
Total	40	40	40	38	40	44	44	45	45	45	45

7 'Old' – pupils who were taught in school before Year 7 (old pupils)

7 'New' – pupils who arrived in School at the Year 7 (11+) entry point (new pupils)

Appendix 2 - Policy for Pupils on Presentation of Work

Mrs Chacksfield

Thursday 3rd July, 2025

Westminster Under School Presentation Policy

Introduction

At our school, we believe everyone should take pride in their work. The way you present your work shows how much effort and care you put in - and it's true that 'you never get a second chance to make a first impression'. By following these simple presentation rules, you show respect for yourself, your teachers and your learning.

Handwriting and Paper

1. Try to join your handwriting where you can, and keep it neat and the same size.
2. Always write in blue ink (from Year 5 up). An ink pen like a fountain pen is best and biro's are not allowed.
3. Keep some A4 file paper at home in case you need it for homework.

Equipment

1. A pencil case with your name on it
2. At least two blue ink pens (and extra cartridges if needed).
3. A green pen for making corrections
4. At least two pencils
5. An eraser (rubber)
6. A pencil sharpener
7. A highlighter
8. A ruler
9. 5-10 colouring pencils
10. Scissors and a glue stick

How to Set Out Your Work

All pupils must:

- Write the date in the top right corner and underline it with a ruler
- Write the title in the centre of the page and underline it with a ruler
- Leave a line between paragraphs
- Write exercise numbers in the margin
- If you make a mistake, cross it out with a neat line or rub it out - no scribbling and no Tippex (liquid or tape)
- Pictures or diagrams should be drawn in pencil, with labels in pen
- Never doodle on your work!

If You Don't Follow These Rules:

- Your teacher will mark your work with a yellow dot
- A second untidy piece will receive a red dot and you will need to redo the work with the correct presentation

When Using a Computer

- Put the date and title at the top in the usual style
- Use a clear, sensible font size and colour
- Leave a line between paragraphs, answers or tasks

By following this policy you help to make your work
the best it can be.

We want you to feel proud every time you hand it in!

Appendix 3 – Homework Policy

HOMEWORK POLICY

The time taken to do homework will vary significantly from pupil to pupil, 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.

Reception: 30 minutes per weekend, plus reading every evening

Year 1: 20 minutes 3 times a week, plus reading every evening

Year 2: 20 minutes 4 times a week, plus reading every evening

Year 3: 20 minutes per night, plus reading

Year 4: 30 minutes per night, plus reading

Year 5: 30 or 60 minutes per night (two subjects on some days)

Year 6:

60 minutes per night (two subjects; 30 minutes each)

Year 7: 60 minutes per night (two subjects; 30 minutes each)

Year 8: 60 minutes per night (two subjects; 30 minutes each)

*the full homework allocation in Year 6 is introduced from the Lent Term

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.
- Encourage your son to check the tasks set on Aptus and to mark tasks as complete once he has finished. Be prepared to reject work that seems to have been done too quickly.
- Show an interest in the homework, engage in discussion with your child about the tasks set, but encourage them to work independently.
- Slower and more anxious pupils 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.
- Inform the teacher if a problem arises and homework cannot be completed. If a pupil gets stuck with their homework, parents are encouraged to help by showing how to do it, but not doing it for them. If significant help has been given, it is helpful to email the teacher concerned to keep them informed.