

Curriculum Information 2015

Changes to English

All schools in Wales now need to follow a new curriculum for English Language, devised by the WJEC exam board. The new course develops the work started in Key Stage 3 in literacy and is more exacting in its requirements for grammatical accuracy and testing the students' ability to communicate effectively in different contexts and for different audiences. From 2017, when your child leaves Darland, only English Language (and not English Literature) will count as a GCSE English qualification. In recognition of the increased importance of this qualification, all students will take English Literature at the end of Year 10, allowing them the whole of Year 11 to concentrate solely on English Language.

Changes to Mathematics.

In much the same way as English, all schools in Wales now have to follow the WJEC Maths syllabus. In keeping with the prominence given to numeracy throughout the school in preparing the students to be able to apply numerical reasoning to real life situations, Mathematics will now become Mathematics Numeracy. A separate course, Mathematics, will test those Maths skills outside the scope of numeracy. At Darland, all students will take Mathematics Numeracy and the majority will take Mathematics in addition. Both qualifications will be examined in the summer of 2017. There are no modular exams and no opportunities to re-sit papers while at Darland.

Changes to the Baccalaureate.

Like most schools in Wales, Darland has for some years now, been teaching the Welsh Baccalaureate to most students in Years 10 and 11. This is a skills based qualification, designed to recognise competency in both the academic curriculum and wider skills applicable to the world of work. The Baccalaureate has faced criticism for requiring learners to gain too many constituent qualifications and consequently it has been rigorously overhauled and will now be assessed against a more robust framework. It is expected that, from this September all students in Wales will take the Baccalaureate, which will become a passport to accessing further and higher education. There will be grades attached to the Baccalaureate as detailed below:

National Welsh Baccalaureate = Grades A*, A, B, C

What students need to achieve to be awarded this qualification.

- A higher grade in the new Skills Challenge Course (itself worth a higher grade GCSE)
- Higher grades in both Mathematics Numeracy and English Language.
- Higher grades in three other GCSEs (or equivalents)

Foundation Welsh Baccalaureate = Grades Pass*, Pass.

- A pass grade in the new Skills Challenge Course (itself worth a higher grade GCSE)
- A G to D grade in both Mathematics Numeracy and English Language.
- A G – D grade in three other GCSEs (or equivalents)



This diagram shows the different elements of the Baccalaureate.

The new Skills Challenge Qualification.

As the above shows, students at Darland will need the Skills Challenge qualification to be awarded the Baccalaureate. In short, this taught course, which is assessed through the production of written assignments throughout the course, comprises four separate Challenges:

- **Personal Challenge:** worth 50% of total marks. This is a research project of the student's choice, which culminates in a 2000 word project.
- **Enterprise and Employability Challenge:** worth 20% of total marks
- **Global Citizenship Challenge:** worth 15% of total marks. This will be taught primarily through PSE lessons.
- **Community Challenge:** worth 15% of total marks.

Throughout the above challenges, the following skills will be developed and assessed: Literacy, Numeracy, Digital Literacy, Personal Effectiveness, Creativity and Innovation, Planning and Organisation, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving.

Overview of the Key Stage 4 Curriculum.

The Key Stage 4 curriculum is divided into two parts: the Learning Core and the Options. In addition to the discrete subjects listed below, the all students receive education in Sex Education and Relationships as well as Careers education and guidance.

Subject	Number of lessons	GCSEs	Notes
English Language & Literature	8	2	
Maths Numeracy and Maths	8	2	
Science	10	2	Students take one Science GCSE in Year 10 and another in Year 11.
Skills Challenge	3	1	
Welsh	3	½ or 1	We hope that most will achieve a full course GCSE
Religious Education	1	½	Year 9 students will start this course in Feb 2015. Full course available as an Option
PE	2	-	Available as a full GCSE course in Options.
PSE	-	-	Taught through the Skills Challenge programme
Option A	5	1	
Option B	5	1	
Option C	5	1	

Choosing Options and Process Deadlines

It is important to spend time talking to teachers and thinking carefully before making your options choice. Mr Roberts and Mr Coyne will in the days following this evening, be briefly interviewing each Year 9 student to check that they have made the right choice for them. Parents are welcome to attend this interview and a booking form is available in the foyer for this purpose.

The process of choosing options is carried out on the website, CareersWales on-line, for which students have all been given their individual logins. This website contains details of all the Options courses running in school, together with the Option B courses running at the College. It is important to note that it will be impossible to grant every student exactly what they want to study in the Options, so for that reason, we ask that all students to choose their 1st and 2nd choices in each Option Block.

- Deadline for choices being made on CareersWalesOnLine ; Friday 13th February.
- Parents informed of details of interviews at the college: Friday 27th February
- Provisional decision on Option allocation sent to parents: Friday 13th March
- Interviews for College courses: Monday & Tuesday 16th & 17th March
- Parents evening for Year 9: Tuesday 17th March
- Parents and students informed of the final decision regarding their Options choices: Friday 20th March.

Useful Websites

Coleg Cambria Courses : www.cambria.ac.uk/14-19network

Qualified for Life (Welsh Government) : www.qualifiedforlife.org.uk

Welsh Baccalaureate : www.welshbaccalaureate.org.uk