

GORDON'S SCHOOL

STUDENT GROUPINGS IN SUBJECTS POLICY

The core principle that guides everything we do is **Putting Students First**.

1. Introduction

In the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and Modern Foreign Languages, students are taught within both traditional academic 'sets' as well as mixed attainment cohorts.

Where subjects are 'set', students may be in different sets across different subjects.

2. Principles

There are several reasons for this:

It is the belief of Gordon's School that students at Key Stage 3 learn most effectively in mixed attainment groups in the majority of subjects. This is based in long-standing educational research such as the Education Endowment Foundation which found that *"On average, pupils experiencing setting or streaming make similar progress to pupils taught in mixed attainment classes."*

However, we do recognise that, particularly in Mathematics and Modern Foreign Languages, setting can aid the progress of students across the attainment range when teaching is specifically targeted to student knowledge and understanding.

It is also understood that, as students progress through KS3 and into KS4, setting by attainment across all the core subjects becomes more appropriate and can aid learning for the majority of students.

In non-core subjects, students are predominantly taught in mixed attainment classes, usually in their tutor group. Adaptive teaching plays an important role in these lessons to enable all students to be appropriately challenged and to learn at a pace that suits them.

3. Subjects

For the reasons outlined above, Gordon's groups students as outlined below:

Mathematics: Students in Mathematics are set from Year 7 through to the end of Year 11.

Modern Foreign Languages: Students in Mathematics are set from Year 7 through to the end of Year 11. Where there are insufficient numbers in a specific language to facilitate setting, students will be taught in a mixed attainment class.

English: Students in Years 7 and 8 will be taught in mixed attainment sets. Students in Years 9-11 will be placed into sets according to attainment as outlined below.

Science: Students in Years 7 and 8 will be taught in mixed attainment sets. Students in Years 9-11 will be placed into sets according to attainment as outlined below.

Non-core subjects: No setting takes place in non-core subjects.

It must also be remembered that, even where setting does occur, any one set is still a mixed attainment group to a certain degree. Therefore, the normal expectation for appropriate adaptive teaching still applies.

3. Setting Criteria

Key Stage 3: Where setting does occur, it will be based largely on internal assessments, classwork and the teacher's professional judgement. Information from the student's previous school and Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests will also be used where available. In Year 7, the Surrey LEA baseline MidYIS tests are given early in the Autumn Term. This is another source of data for Heads of Department to use in their setting decisions.

Key Stage 4: At the end of Key Stage 3, students will take internal examinations in the core subjects. The results of these examinations, along with internal assessments, classwork and the teacher's professional judgement will be used to determine core subject sets as students enter Key Stage 4. Throughout their time in Key Stage 4, ongoing class assessments, classwork and teacher's professional judgement will be used to determine appropriate setting decisions.

Sixth Form: Each student has achieved the minimum entry requirement for the Sixth Form and for the individual subjects they are studying, therefore groups in the Sixth Form are not set by attainment.

4. Changing of Sets

It is important that sets are not seen to be static with no movement of students. Individual students will mature academically and make progress at different rates and, because of this, may need to change sets.

It is the direct responsibility of Heads of Department to ensure that students are in the appropriate set for their attainment level, and to have a strategy for monitoring this. Each of the Departments that sets students have arrangements in place to consider changes to the composition of the sets throughout Key Stage 3 and 4.

The decision to change the set of a student will be based on factors such as:

- Internal assessments
- Classwork
- Prep
- Teacher judgement

When it is necessary to move a student to another set, either higher or lower, an explanation should always be given to the student. Parents/Carers should also be informed in writing by the Head of Department about the move and the reasons for it. There is a standard school format letter, which is available for this.

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