

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Braes we are keen to hear the views of our young people and parents/carers to help inform our ongoing school improvement. Recently, we have been considering a refinement to the structure of our S3 and S4 curricular experience for pupils. This would build upon the current curriculum model for Third and Fourth Year pupils, seeking to streamline this experience and ensure even greater consistency, and depth of learning for our young people.

### **What is being proposed?**

*At present :*

- all S3 pupils continue with their core lessons in Religious and Moral Education, Physical Education and Personal and Social Education.
- all S3 pupils continue to study Modern Languages, Mathematics and English in S3. S3 pupils also make 5 other subject choices. These choices are made during the young person's time in S2. Therefore young people study 8 courses in total in S3, in addition to their core periods described above.
- when S3 pupils move into S4, they reduce the number of courses studied to 7, drawing these from the subjects studied in S3 and taking these through to examinations and assessments at the end of S4.
- S4 pupils do not have to continue with Modern Languages, but can select it as one of the subjects they wish to continue with.

In short, when moving into S4, apart from English and Mathematics, pupils can stop studying one of their chosen subjects from S3, or Modern Languages.

Current S3 curriculum :

Year	Mandatory	Choice	Core
<b>S3</b>	English (5 periods) Modern Languages (3 periods) Mathematics (5 periods)	5 selected subjects (3 periods each)	PE (2 periods) RME (1 period) PSE (1 period)
<b>S4</b>	English (4 periods) Mathematics (4 periods)	5 selected subjects, drawn from those studied in S3 (4 periods each)	PE (2 periods) RME (1 period) PSE (1 period)

*Under the new proposed structure :*

- all S3 pupils continue with their core lessons in Religious and Moral Education, Physical Education and Personal and Social Education.
- all S3 pupils continue to study Mathematics and English in S3. Modern Languages would no longer be a mandatory subject for all pupils. Young people can select Modern Languages as an option in S3/4.

- S3 pupils also make 5 other subject choices. These choices are made during the young person's time in S2. Therefore young people study 7 courses in total in S3, in addition to their core periods described above.
- when S3 pupils move from S3 into S4, they continue to study those same 7 courses, taking these through to examinations and assessments at the end of S4. Young people would not change course between S3 and S4.
- The S3/4 pupil experience is now considered a 2 year pathway, towards National Qualifications

New proposed S3 curriculum :

Year	Mandatory	Choice	Core
<b>S3</b>	English (4 periods) Mathematics (4 periods)	5 selected subjects (4 periods each)	PE (2 periods) RME (1 period) PSE (1 period)
<b>S4</b>	English (4 periods) Mathematics (4 periods)	Continuation of the 5 selected subjects above (4 periods of each)	PE (2 periods) RME (1 period) PSE (1 period)

There are many reasons why we are advocating this change and keen to hear people's views on it. This 2 year pathway to National Qualifications can promote :

- greater **consistency in the groups of pupils studying subjects** and in classes
- greater **depth** of learning across the 2 year pathway
- more scope for **teacher continuity** over S3 and S4
- a **more efficient timetable** allowing us to **maximise the options** available for pupils in the senior phase
- **clarity for pupils** over their S4 options

Any curricular change does require us to plan carefully and inform the process with views of our school community. The proposed reduction in time in English and Mathematics in S3 is also something we are considering in our thinking. As previously advised, we would therefore like to invite parents/carers of young people currently in S2 and S1, to an information-sharing event on **Thursday 18th September, at 7pm in our assembly hall**. At this event, you will be able to hear more about the rationale for the proposed change, and views gathered from our young people. Braes staff will be on hand at the end of the event to have individual conversations with parents/carers who may have specific questions or suggestions. We recognise not everyone will be able to attend the event, and will provide further information on what is covered on the evening to all parents/carers of S1/2 pupils.

There will also be an opportunity for parents/carers to share their views on the proposal with the school via an online questionnaire. As you would expect, there will be extensive consultation and conversations taking place with our young people in relation to this proposal.

Many thanks for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact the school if you would like more information directly.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Livingstone