

23. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

23.1 UPPER SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Please see document attached.

23.2 ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

At The Acorn School, all subjects are assessed using our own, unique grading system, which has been in place for the past twenty-three years. The aim of this system is to provide a comprehensive, objective assessment of the students' academic and artistic abilities and their participation in class. We feel that marking students using these criteria is essential, as they are all qualities that are required for further academic study, and it ensures that all areas of studentship are assessed.

The overall grades for academic subjects are calculated using the following components:

- 1) **Coursework (40%)**
- 2) **Participation and contribution in class (20%)**
- 3) **Examination result (40%)**

The overall grades for artistic and physical education subjects are calculated using the following components:

- 1) **Practical (70%)**
- 2) **Written Work (30%)**

The following grade boundaries are used for all subjects:

A* = above 90%; A = 80-89%; B = 70-79%; C = 60-69%; D = 50-59%; E = 40-49%;
U = under 40%

23.3 ACADEMIC EQUIVALENCY STATEMENT

The Acorn School has opted out of government examinations and qualifications (GCSE and A-levels), and instead offers its own unique assessment system, which has been in place for over twenty-three years. The strong academic curriculum is balanced with regular physical activity and outward bound trips, encouraging skills in leadership, confidence and creative problem-solving, as well as working effectively as a team.

The school's academic curriculum and teaching approach is of a very high standard, and students leave the school with a sound understanding across a diverse range of subjects. The

students receive their Certificate of Education at the end of Class 10 (age 16), when they would otherwise be completing their G.C.S.E's. During their final two years, when they would otherwise be doing their AS and A2 Levels, the students begin to take on self-researched modular studies, with the necessary support and mentorship that sees them produce work of high quality. The subjects and grades from these final two years form the students' Diploma in Education. Through engaging in self-directed modular studies, the students gain skills that will allow them to excel in undergraduate study or their chosen career, including independent research, self-motivation, and the ability to manage their time and meet deadlines. The final year experience of self-led studies at The Acorn School also benefits students by helping to develop their confidence and decision-making abilities, so that they go on to be university students or employees who actively engage and are able to make insightful contributions to discussions with tutors, peers and colleagues.

The academic standards required to achieve the Certificate of Education and Diploma of Education has been accepted as being an academic alternative to GCSEs and A-Levels, respectively, by a large number of universities and employers.

All our alumni who have chosen to enter higher education have so far been accepted by their universities of choice, and often proven themselves to be a valuable addition to the student body. Their ability to fully engage with their studies and provide thoughtful and interesting input during taught sessions have seen the majority of our students not only attaining excellent grades and graduating with highly respectable degrees, but also leaving a lasting impression on their tutors and fellow students from their creative thinking, their confidence as individuals, and the remarkable quality of their work.

The Acorn School has had the pleasure of doing extremely well in its OFSTED reports, with our 2012 inspection having resulted in an 'Outstanding' (the full report can be found via our website: <http://www.theacornschool.com/about/ofsted/>).

I hope this has helped to clarify the credibility of our grading system and qualifications. Should you have any other enquiries about the learning processes and standards of our unique education model, I would be more than happy to provide further explanations.

Signed:

Graeme Whiting (Headmaster)

Updated: 1 June 2017

To be reviewed: 1 June 2018

By whom: Headmaster

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