



Higham Lane North Academy

Curriculum Policy



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1. Curriculum aims

Our curriculum aims/intends to:

- Provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils that's coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge for skills and future learning and employment
- Enable pupils to develop knowledge, understand concepts and acquire skills, and be able to choose and apply these in relevant situations
- Support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Support pupils' physical development and responsibility for their own health, and enable them to be active
- Promote a positive attitude towards learning
- Ensure equal access to learning for all pupils, with high expectations for every pupil and appropriate levels of challenge and support
- Have a high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils
- Equip pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- Provide subject choices that support pupils' learning and progression, and enable them to work towards achieving their goals
- Provide a broad curriculum prioritising a strong academic core of subjects, such as those offered in the EBacc
- Develop pupils' independent learning skills and resilience, to equip them for further/higher education and employment

These curriculum aims are underpinned by firstly our ethos, 'we are proud because we do what is right,' alongside our school values of being conscientious, compassionate and confident. Within this we teach our STAR values through the curriculum – service, teamwork, ambition and resilience, and as a result, our curriculum delivers these through the following ways:

- feel safe, happy and healthy and know how to keep themselves, and others, safe, happy and healthy;
- enjoy high-quality learning opportunities, in a school at the leading edge of innovation; feel challenged and inspired to achieve excellence in every aspect of their lives.
- become confident, enterprising, creative learners, fully-equipped for life and work;
- become fully-rounded and responsible citizens, making a positive contribution to the school, local, national and global community.
- Be proud because you do what is right with conscientious nature, a compassionate approach and therefore confidence - pupils will demonstrate these core values through their lived experience of the curriculum.

The curriculum, through its design and delivery seeks to:-

- Reflect the aims and values of the school.
- Build on pupils' prior experiences, skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Provide opportunities for our pupils to succeed in their learning in a safe and happy environment and in so doing, develop the confidence, knowledge and skills needed to contribute to the wider society.
- Promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
- Equip all students with the essential skills of literacy and numeracy.

- Develop lively, enquiring minds and the ability to empathise, question and think creatively and critically.
- Enable all pupils to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and practical abilities relevant to the needs of adult life at home, work, at leisure and as consumers and citizens in a fast, changing world.
- Enable all pupils to acquire a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs including a respect, knowledge and understanding of other people's religious, cultural and moral values and ways of life.
- Enable all pupils to acquire an understanding of the social, economic and practical order of the world and of the inter-dependence of individuals, groups and nations.
- Enable all pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges, responsibilities and to experience a sense of personal achievement.
- Enable all pupils to develop self-confidence, self-awareness, a sense of self-worth and fulfilment, with the will to contribute to the welfare of others and to society.
- Enable all pupils to handle uncertainty, to respond positively to change and to create and implement new ideas.
- Develop independent and collaborative learning skills in all pupils.
- Aim to raise standards of achievement through outstanding practice in teaching and learning.
- Enable all pupils to achieve a positive destination.

Using these aims and values as our starting point we have developed a broad, balanced, relevant, coherent and differentiated curriculum which meets our learners' needs and reflects the philosophy, values and aims of the school. We believe in the National Curriculum, upon which our curriculum is based.

We believe in a knowledge-based curriculum where teachers are clear about delivering substantive and disciplinary knowledge through their subject areas. Resources, such as knowledge booklets and knowledge organisers help to achieve this aim.

We recognise that it is our duty to provide pupils with as many enriching cultural opportunities as possible that supplement and enrich their understanding of the curriculum and the wider world we inhabit. This involves direct, explicit teaching in a form which provides students with a deep cultural understanding alongside offering cultural opportunities beyond the classroom. Our Enrichment Experience is a wonderful opportunity for all students to take part in a cultural experience, linked to subjects, beyond the classroom.

Our curriculum is intended to develop habits of mind, ways of thinking about a subject, ways of studying that subject and ways of being a practitioner of a subject.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy reflects the requirements for academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as per the [Academies Act 2010](#), and the [National Curriculum programmes of study](#) which we have chosen to follow.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) and [Equality Act 2010](#), and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's [Governance Handbook](#).

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation.

The governing board will also ensure that:

- A robust framework is in place for setting curriculum priorities and aspirational targets
- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a "broad and balanced curriculum" which includes English, maths, science and (subject to providing the right to withdraw) religious education, and enough teaching time is provided for pupils to cover the requirements of the funding agreement
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with special educational needs (SEN)
- All courses provided for pupils below the age of 19 that lead to qualifications, such as GCSEs and A-levels, are approved by the secretary of state
- The school implements the relevant statutory assessment arrangements
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- Pupils from year 7 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced

3.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to, and that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the aims of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the governing board
- They manage requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects, where appropriate
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements
- The governing board is fully involved in decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- The governing board is advised on whole-school targets in order to make informed decisions
- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including children with SEN

3.3 Other staff

Other staff will ensure that the school curriculum is implemented in accordance with this policy. For instance, it is the role of curriculum leaders to deliver their curriculum with clear intent, implementation and impact and to conduct quality assurance activities to ensure that pupils are maximising the progress required.

4. Organisation and planning

4.1 Curriculum Implementation

Key features of our current curriculum model:-

- Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 follow a 3 year KS3 curriculum. This enables pupils to study subjects in greater depth and breadth, building on KS2 starting points and giving them full entitlement of the curriculum before they begin KS4 in Year 10. We remain ambitious for our pupils though, and through careful planning of the curriculum, and where we have robustly demonstrated that students have both met, and exceeded, the aims and objectives of the national curriculum, students will begin studying topics beyond the national curriculum during Year 9. These scaffolds help to prepare pupils for their learning in the next key stage.
 - **Being ambitious for our pupils**, we are fully committed to the EBacc qualification. Pupils in KS4 **have three option choices** (from a list of 18 subjects) under a **'free options' system**. This gives them the widest-possible choice. The **only stipulation is that pupils have to choose a language and a humanity** although this restriction is relaxed in the case of a small number of students with unique needs. Students can only choose one D&T subject and two vocational subjects. Students are **not forced to choose particular pathways based on their ability**.
 - **Separate sciences** are offered in KS4.
 - **Further Maths and Statistics** are offered in KS4 to the more able where appropriate.
 - **Open KS4 bucket includes:** Business, Design and Technology (including Engineering), Drama, Fine Art, Food Preparation and Nutrition, ICT, Music, PE/Sport.
 - **Vocational provision in KS4 includes:** NCFE Technical Award in Business and Enterprise, OCR Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Creative iMedia, OCR Level 1/2 Cambridge, National Certificate in Engineering. These vocational qualifications are offered as an alternative to GCSEs in these subjects at KS4 to suit preferred learning styles and learners' needs.
 - KS4 offers **alternative pathways** (e.g. separate sciences, fast maths, vocational subjects). 'National initiatives' e.g. EBacc also influence our curriculum offer.
 - **At GCSE, support for pupils with weak literacy skills** is provided through Extra English lessons which are timetabled during KS4 modern foreign languages. In Years 7 and 8, students receive Extra English and follow a recognised programme called 'Direct Instruction' which aims to develop their literacy skills. For support, some Year 7 pupils follow this program alongside the Year 7 English Scheme of Learning. Some pupils also receive ten hours of English or Maths tuition during PE or C&PSHEE teaching time for 6 weekly periods.
 - **Alternative qualifications** are offered to some lower ability students e.g. Entry Level Pathways qualifications.
 - We **strongly support art, D&T, music, drama and sport** and have maintained curriculum time within these subjects. Students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 enjoy 4 hours of PE per fortnight.
 - In a typical academic year, the formal curriculum is enhanced by **a wide range of co-curricular opportunities** that are offered each week which provide a plethora of sporting, creative and artistic opportunities. In addition to this, we are a long-established provider of the Duke of Edinburgh awards, which begin in Year 9 and are run jointly with Higham Lane School.
 - **More able students** in Key Stage 4 participate in our Super-Curricular Society which provides opportunities to deepen subject knowledge and explore degree courses, take part in A Level taster lessons, visit universities as well as learn practical skills such as first aid and sign language.
 - In a typical academic year a wide range of **educational visits** would take place during the course of the school year
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- The **PSHRE** curriculum covers a range of topics relating to physical, mental and personal well-being. In a typical academic year, work in C&PSHEE is supported by speakers from

external agencies and theme days where whole year groups take part in workshops covering such issues as sexual health, drugs and knives and weapons, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training for Year 8 & 9.

- **British Values** is explicitly taught across all subject areas and via our assembly and PSHE programmes. It is taught within our academic, character and culture, and care and support curriculum. It is audited as part of our robust quality assurance activities.
- **SMSC** is explicitly taught across all subject areas and via our assembly and PSHE programmes. It is taught within our academic, character and culture, and care and support curriculum. It is audited as part of our robust quality assurance activities.
- A programme of activities has been developed for tutors to follow each week during **registration time**. This is linked to our care and support curriculum alongside providing opportunities for pupils to enhance their literacy skills.

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. Higham Lane North Academy recognises that AI has many uses to help students learn, but may also lend itself to cheating and plagiarism.

Students may not use AI tools:

- * During assessments, including internal and external assessments, and coursework
- * To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work

Students may use AI tools:

- * As a research tool to help them find out about new topics and ideas
- * When specifically studying and discussing AI in schoolwork, for example in IT lessons or art homework about AI-generated images. All AI-generated content must be properly attributed
- * Where a student uses an AI tool, the student should retain a copy of the question(s) asked and the AI-generated responses. Students must submit this along with the assessment.

Staff should:

- * Be aware that AI tools are still being developed and should use such tools with caution as they may provide inaccurate, inappropriate or biased content
- * Make students aware of the risks of using AI tools and that they need to appropriately reference AI as a source of information to maintain the integrity of assessments
- * See our Home Learning Policy for more information on how students can and cannot use AI for their assignments.

As the curriculum experts for their subjects, Subject Leaders, in close liaison with their Senior Leadership Team link, choose the GCSE and A-level specifications for their subjects and resource these courses accordingly. The introduction of any new courses/specifications is supported by CPD for the staff delivering these courses, where needed. Evaluation of the curriculum within particular subjects forms part of link meetings involving the Headteacher and/or their Senior Leadership Team link.

5. Inclusion

Teachers set high expectations for all pupils. They will use appropriate assessment to set ambitious targets and plan challenging work for all groups, including:

- More able pupils
- Pupils with low prior attainment
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pupils with SEN
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Teachers will plan lessons so that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities can study every National Curriculum subject, wherever possible, and ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving.

Teachers will also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Lessons will be planned so that teaching opportunities help pupils to develop their English, and to support pupils to take part in all subjects.

Further information can be found in our statement of equality information and objectives, and in our SEN policy and information report.

6. Monitoring: Curriculum Impact

Progress towards and against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) measuring the impact of the curriculum will be communicated to SLT and the GSC Curriculum and Standards sub-committee to support curriculum evaluation, evolution and review.

As a school we use a wide range of quality assurance activities to monitor and track the effectiveness of the delivery of the curriculum. This includes, and is not limited to, internal data analysis; lesson observations of teachers; learning walks of departments; book and folder looks within department curriculum time between teachers; book and folder looks completed by subject leaders and SLT; 'Curriculum Conversations' between SL/SLT links; and a wide range of student voice activities.

7. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy
- SEN policy and information report
- Equality information and objectives