

Curriculum Policy

Aim

The aims of our curriculum are to:

- meet all statutory requirements
- provide a coherently planned sequence and structure in each subject which will:
 - detail the core content and subject specific skills which students will learn and the order in which they will learn them
 - ensure that students develop a deep understanding of key ideas and concepts
 - be adapted, designed and developed for students with special educational needs and disabilities
- ensure that the planned curriculum in each subject provides support for progression in other subjects where appropriate
- have systems in place which assess the extent to which students have grasped and understood the core content and skills
- use the information from this assessment to ensure that these gaps are addressed
- deliver high standards and achievement in all years
- provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities that contribute to the overall learning experience
- support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- support physical development and students' responsibility for their own health, and enable students to be active

This policy reflects the requirements for Academies to provide a broad and balanced curriculum (2010 Academies Act). As an Academy it is not statutory for us to follow the National Curriculum. While we do follow broadly its structure and content, we also make some adjustments from time-to-time. This is to ensure that we meet the needs and interests of all our students and prepare them thoroughly for study at GCSE and beyond.

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.

It complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Implementation

a) Curriculum Organisation

Timetable

The school operates a 24 period teaching week. There are five periods per day on Monday-Thursday (3 in the morning, 2 in the afternoon), each of which lasts for one hour. There are four periods on Friday (3 in the morning, 1 in the afternoon). School ends one hour earlier each Friday and the remaining hour is used for staff development. The timetable is structured across two weeks, with an A and a B week.

Years 7-9

The curriculum is based on the subjects identified in the National Curriculum. However, we do view our curriculum as being planned and delivered across five years (Years 7-11) rather than being separated out into Key Stages. In the case of the option subjects, students make a choice during Year 9 about which optional subjects they want to study from the start of Year 10 onwards.

We believe that it is important for students to make their option choices during Year 9 rather than earlier. This is because we are committed to students studying all the National Curriculum subjects for at least three years in order to:

- provide them with access to a broad and rich curriculum
- develop their core knowledge and understanding across the full range of subjects
- make fully informed choices when it comes to selecting GCSE options during Year 9

The subjects which almost all students will study from the start of Year 7 are listed in the table below:

Subject	Year 7	Years 8 & 9
Art & Design	2 hours per fortnight	2 hours per fortnight
Drama	1 hour per fortnight	1 hour per fortnight
Creative Technologies	3 hours per fortnight	3 hours per fortnight
English	8 hours per fortnight	7 hours per fortnight
Geography	3 hours per fortnight	3 hours per fortnight
History	3 hours per fortnight	3 hours per fortnight
Mathematics	7 hours per fortnight	7 hours per fortnight
Modern Foreign Languages	6 hours per fortnight	6 hours per fortnight
Music	3 hours per fortnight	3 hours per fortnight
PE & Dance	4 hours per fortnight	4 hours per fortnight
Religious Studies	2 hours per fortnight	3 hours per fortnight
Science	6 hours per fortnight	6 hours per fortnight

The Creative Technologies include computing, design technology and food preparation & nutrition. These subjects are taught within a carousel with drama.

In MFL, almost all students are taught French throughout Years 7-9. The classes are re-set according to ability at the start of Term 3 in Year 7. From this point, the higher ability classes in band X and band Y

pick up a second language (either German or Spanish).¹ In these cases three hours per fortnight are spent on French and three hours on the second language. The remaining students will only study French and will have 6 hours per fortnight of lessons. The MFL Subject Leader is responsible for deciding which second language students will study. The students are allocated to the dual language classes by the Subject Leader using a range of prior assessment data to ensure balanced classes. This allocation is not based on student or parental preference with the exception of where there is an identified Special Educational Need which may affect the allocation of language or where the language is spoken on a daily basis at home.

Setting Arrangements

Setting is arranged to meet the following objectives:

- to provide the most appropriate context for individual students' learning
- to allow for effective time-tabling (to minimise split classes and to provide an even distribution of lessons across a fortnight)

In classes, both mixed ability ones and those set by ability, there is a range of ability. In addition, individual students learn in different ways: some work well in groups while others prefer to work individually; some perform best in long-term projects while others like defined tasks; some respond well to oral work while others prefer written work; some find written communication difficult but work more effectively on a computer or mobile device.

To take account of these differences and the range of ability in any class, all staff have a responsibility, when planning work, to meet the needs of all students. This will involve, at different times, adapting tasks; providing different resources; developing extension work; providing a variety of learning styles and environments; setting individual goals; giving different levels of support, and offering a variety of ways to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. This applies to students of all ability levels – including the need to ensure that higher prior attainment students are stretched fully and realise their full potential.

Setting arrangements for the academic year 2023-24 are as follows:

Linear Block

Year	Subjects	Notes
Y7	Art, English, Geography, History, Music, RS, Science	Six mixed-ability classes constructed by the Deputy Head
Y8	Art, English Geography, History, Music, RS, Science	Seven mixed-ability classes constructed by the Deputy Head
Y9	Art, Geography, History, Music, PE & Dance, RS	Seven mixed-ability classes constructed by the Deputy Head ²

¹ The number of classes picking up a second language will vary depending on the size and ability profile of the year group. In 2023-24, in Years 8 and 9, three classes in band X and two classes in band Y will study two languages while in Year 7 two classes study two languages in each band.

² In 2023-24, Years 8 and 9 will have seven groups accommodating larger intakes following an increase in applications for places in those year groups. The new Year 7 will have six groups as the intake will have gone back to approximately 180 students.

In addition, the following subjects have some degree of independence when organising their classes:

Subjects	Setting Arrangements
English and Mathematics	<p>In Years 7 and 8 Mathematics is blocked across the whole year and they are able to set independently within this block. There are seven classes in each year group.</p> <p>In Years 7 and 8, English is taught in mixed ability classes within the linear block.</p> <p>In Year 9 English and Mathematics are blocked together in two separate option blocks. Although the students in each block are the same, the subjects are able to set the classes independently of each other within the block. Both subjects have eight classes in Year 9.</p>
Science	In Year 9, Science is blocked across the year and the classes can be set independently of other subjects.
Creative Technologies and drama carousel	Eight mixed-ability classes in two bands with students moving on a carousel of activities between Computing, Design Technology, Food Preparation & Nutrition and Drama during Years 7-9.
MFL	Seven classes in Years 8 and 9 and six classes in Year 7. These classes are set independently by ability in two bands.
PE & Dance	PE & Dance is blocked in two separate bands in Years 8 and 9.

Unless specified above the composition of individual sets is the responsibility of the Subject Leader.

Alternative Provision

While the vast majority of our students join the school equipped with good literacy and numeracy skills, we are aware that some students require additional support in these areas. We therefore provide targeted support for these students. This includes identifying a small group of students ('Booster Learners') who have timetabled literacy and numeracy support sessions in our Learning Support department. They are also supported with the development of their wider 'cultural capital' to help them access the wider school curriculum and prepare them for adult life. These students do not follow a Modern Foreign Language in Years 7-9.

Years 10-11

Our aim is that all of our students in Years 10 & 11 follow a broad and balanced curriculum that prepares them for their post-16 studies, the world of work and adult life. We believe that our curriculum is flexible enough to meet the individual needs of all our students. Some subjects (the core) are compulsory, but we offer the opportunity for students to make choices about subjects to study, supporting their core curriculum. We cover all the entitlement areas required by the National Curriculum.

Core Subjects

Subject	Description
English	All students take English Language GCSE and almost all also take English Literature as well. Students who will not be entered for English Literature are identified by the English Subject Leader, although the final decision rests with the Deputy Head.
Mathematics	All students take a GCSE in Mathematics.
Science	Those students who do not opt for Triple Science (separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry and Physics) take the Combined Science qualification which is worth 2 GCSEs.
ICT	Year 10 and 11 students develop their ICT skills across the curriculum (linked to our 'Bring Your Own Device' scheme).
Religious Studies	All students study for the GCSE Full Course RS qualification.
PE	Core PE is non-examined – students receive two hours of PE per week.

Time allocations for the core subjects and option blocks are shown below:

Subject	Timetable allocation
English	7 hours per fortnight
Mathematics	7 hours per fortnight
Physical Education	4 hours per fortnight
Religious Studies	2 hours per fortnight
Science	8 hours per fortnight
Option Block A	5 hours per fortnight
Option Block B	5 hours per fortnight
Option Block C	5 hours per fortnight
Option Block D	5 hours per fortnight

Option Subjects

The options process is based on providing the most appropriate combination of subjects for each individual student whilst, at the same time, ensuring that every student receives a broad and balanced education. Most combinations of choices are allowed but serious consideration is given to further education and employment prospects.

The student choices are recorded on an options' form which is completed online. This is submitted to the Deputy Head who has responsibility for creating the option blocks from these choices. It is made clear to both students and parents that although we will do our best to provide them with all their choices this may not be possible. In addition, if a subject is under-subscribed we may have to withdraw it. On the other hand, if a subject is oversubscribed we may ask some students to consider taking a different subject.

In the event of a subject being over-subscribed and the school being unable to expand provision to accommodate the additional students, the following criteria will be used (in rank order) to allocate places in order to ensure that we best meet the needs of our students:

1. Students with an identified SEND
2. Students who have not been allocated one or more of their other option choices owing to the construction of the option blocks
3. Students who have been allocated their other first choices but cannot be allocated their reserve subject owing to the construction of the option blocks
4. Once the first three groups have been allocated, the remaining students will be drawn through lots

Languages at GCSE

We continue to value the study of languages at GCSE as an important part of our curriculum offer. This is, in part, the result of the current government's commitment to the 'English Baccalaureate' collection of subjects (which include a language). However, this decision is also under-pinned by our belief that, in an increasingly globalised world, an ability to speak a foreign language (and to know how to learn languages) may be a key requirement for future economic well-being.

As a result, all dual linguists in Years 7-9, apart from those meeting the following criteria are required to take at least one language as one of their GCSE options:

- those students who have an identified Special Educational Need which impacts on their ability to learn a language
- those students who will be entered for a language at GCSE which is not taught at the school

We also encourage our students to consider opting for two languages at GCSE. Students who are currently studying one language in Year 9 are also encouraged to choose a language as an option.

EBacc subjects at GCSE

The government, employers and universities have recognised that while it is important to offer students a curriculum which meets their needs and interests, it is also crucial that doors are not closed off to them in terms of future progression; for example, for students hoping to go to university.

The Russell Group of top universities has identified 'facilitating subjects' at A Level i.e. subjects which are most likely to be required or preferred for entry to degree courses and ones that will keep the most options open. The subjects the Group identifies are those which the government has included in a group of subjects at GCSE which it has termed the 'English Baccalaureate' (EBacc) subjects. These include:

- English
- Mathematics
- Sciences (Combined Science or Triple Sciences - Biology, Chemistry or Physics)
- Geography and History
- Languages (classical and modern).

Almost all students are therefore required to opt for at least one additional EBacc subject (as well as the core curriculum of English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Combined Science). These additional subjects include:

- Computing
- Geography
- History
- Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish)
- Triple Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics)

Students are able to choose freely for their remaining three options. They are also able to choose further EBacc subjects as part of these remaining choices. It should be noted, as outlined above, that all students currently studying two languages in Year 9 (French and German or French and Spanish) will be required to opt for a language at GCSE (apart from those students who meet the criteria identified above). This can count as their additional EBacc subject.

While we believe that this requirement is appropriate for the vast majority of our students, we are aware that it may not be suitable for everyone. We will therefore identify a relatively small number of students each year whom are not required to choose an EBacc subject. The final decision, as to which students this will apply to is the school's and is the result of discussions between the Deputy Head, Head of House, SENCO and tutor. These students will be allowed to choose EBacc subjects as their options but will not be required to do so.

The above policy (relating to English Baccalaureate subjects at GCSE), in the same way as any policy relating to the commitments of Gillotts School towards its students (and others), will be considered and applied giving due regard to the School's goals of eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. To this end, the application of the policy will always be subject to the Gillotts Equality Duty Statement (and the principles set out therein) and in the event of any conflict between that Statement and this policy, the former will prevail.

The option subjects which will be taught in 2023-24 are shown in the table below:

GCSEs		
Art & Design	Food Preparation	Music
Business	Geography	PE
Computing (Y10 only)	History	Triple Science
Dance (Y11 only)	MFL - French	Sociology
Design Technology	MFL – German	
Drama	MFL – Spanish	
Vocational Courses		
BTEC Technical Award Child Development		
Other Courses		
Life Beyond School	Extra English & Maths	

Other Courses

While the majority of students opt for ten GCSEs/ vocational courses leading to public examinations the options offer also includes two other combinations of courses:

- In the case of students who have the potential to achieve a Grade 4 in English/ Mathematics but need additional support in these subjects, they are able to opt for 'extra English and Maths' as one of their option subjects. These students will still complete nine GCSE/ vocational courses.
- The Life Beyond School course is aimed at students for whom a full set of GCSE or vocational courses leading up to public examinations is not an appropriate curriculum. The Life Beyond School course has been developed within the school to develop knowledge and skills which will help students prepare for adult life (e.g. applying for jobs, enterprise skills, financial management). It includes the teaching of some of the BTEC Workskills qualification units which are certificated. It also provides opportunities for work experience and support in English and Maths when possible. These students are also likely to be entered for eight GCSE/ vocational courses (subject to discussion with parents/ carers).

Alternative Provision

Although the vast majority of students will be entered for GCSEs in all the subjects indicated above, in certain circumstances alternative qualifications (e.g. Entry level Certificate) may be deemed more appropriate. Some students may also be allocated an option block(s) in Learning Support where they are able to be supported with homework, study and revision skills. In these cases, an individual learning programme is constructed for the students which integrates vocational/ subject learning, personal and social development and functional skills. The responsibility for putting this programme in place lies with the SENCO although the final decision rests with the Deputy Head.

We have also made use of alternative, off-site provision where this has been appropriate to meet the needs of individual students. Students are directed towards these courses/ provision on a case-by-case basis.

Setting Arrangements

The main setting arrangements in Years 10 and 11 in 2023-24 are as follows:

Year 10 Core Subjects

English	Seven classes set by ability (with RS) across the year – the lead in setting is taken by the English Subject Leader
Mathematics	Seven classes set independently by ability (4 in band X and 3 in band Y) - the students are allocated to the same bands as in Science and PE
Science	Seven classes set independently by ability (4 in band X and 3 in band Y) - the students are allocated to the same bands as in Mathematics and PE
PE	Seven mixed ability classes set independently (4 in band X and 3 in band Y) - the students are allocated to the same bands as in Mathematics and Science

The allocation of students to bands for Mathematics, Science & PE is led by the Maths and Science Subject Leaders. However, they ensure that they consult the PE Subject Leader.

Year 11 Core Subjects

English	Eight classes set by ability (with RS) across the year – the lead in setting is taken by the English Subject Leader
Mathematics	Eight classes set independently by ability (5 in band X and 3 in band Y) - the students are allocated to the same bands as in Science and PE
Science	Eight classes set independently by ability (5 in band X and 3 in band Y) - the students are allocated to the same bands as in Mathematics and PE
PE	Eight mixed ability classes set independently (5 in band X and 3 in band Y) - the students are allocated to the same bands as in Mathematics and Science

The allocation of students to bands for Mathematics, Science & PE is led by the Maths and Science Subject Leaders. However, they ensure that they consult the PE Subject Leader.

Year 10 and 11 Option subjects

The option blocks are constructed in order to meet choices of as many students as possible. If multiple sets of one subject are offered these will be placed in the same option block (to facilitate setting) where this does not have an adverse effect on option choices.

Unless specified above the composition of individual sets is the responsibility of the Subject Leader.

Modifying a student's curriculum

In a small number of cases, it may be necessary to allow students to modify their curriculum during Years 10 and 11. This will involve them being allowed to reduce the number of subjects which they are studying and/ or being entered for public examinations. The three main reasons for making such an adjustment to a student's curriculum are:

- where there is an identified special educational need which means that an adjustment to the curriculum is required.
- where there are long-term attendance issues which means that an adjustment to the curriculum is required.
- where there are significant, and medically identified, health reasons which mean that an adjustment to the curriculum is required.

When deciding the number of GCSEs which a student will be entered for we will also look at other circumstances on a case-by-case basis. There are circumstances which may impact on a student's ability to achieve as well as possible, for example significant issues that impact on their ability to study at home such as being a Young Carer.

We do not, in general, make an adjustment to a child's curriculum or the number of GCSEs s/he is entered for simply because s/he is not doing well in a subject or does not enjoy it.

The Deputy Head will take the final decision relating to such modifications to a student's curriculum.

Disapplication of the National Curriculum

In certain circumstances it may be deemed suitable that a student does not follow part of the National Curriculum (disapplication). As an Academy we are not required to follow the National Curriculum. In circumstances where the National Curriculum is dis-applied on a permanent basis for a student, the Deputy Head will inform the governing body.

Careers, Citizenship and Personal Social & Health Education

This is combined into a subject termed 'PSHE' in Years 7-11. The careers, citizenship and PSHE curriculum give students the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, healthy and independent lives, and to become informed, active and responsible citizens, capable of forming good relationships and respecting the differences between people.

The delivery of PSHE is mapped across the curriculum, into tutor periods and also five discrete PSHE days (two full days and three half days) which take place each year. Students also receive careers support from Adviza.

Sex & Relationships Education

Please see the Sex & Relationships Education Policy

Drugs Education

Please see the Drugs Policy

Religious Education

Religious Education is taught to all students as a discrete timetabled subject. While we ensure that we meet the requirements of the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus in Years 7 and 8 we also ensure that these years are used to prepare the students for the GCSE which they start studying in depth from Year 9.

Physical Education

Physical education is delivered to all students as a discrete subject on their timetable.

Extra-curricular activities

The school has a wide and varied programme of cultural and sporting activities that take place outside the formal curriculum. The aim is to provide opportunities for all students to participate in elements of this programme.

Special Educational Needs

Please see the Special Educational Needs Policy

Examination Entries

It is expected that all students who embark on a course leading to a public examination will be entered for that examination. Subject Leaders are expected to identify at an early stage students who are in danger of failing to fulfil the examination board's requirements in relation to non-examined assessment, attendance or other criteria. The final decision about whether to remove the entry of a student into a public examination rests with the Deputy Head.

The school pays for all first-time entries for public examinations. If a student should decide to retake a particular exam module, where this opportunity is available, s/he will be expected to pay the full entry fee. Reference can be made to the school's Charging and Remissions Policy for further information.

b) Curriculum Progression

The scheduling and sequencing of the curriculum in individual subjects is the responsibility of the Subject Leader. Each subject is required to have a programme of study in place for each year as well as schemes of work for each unit of work. These are underpinned by the following elements:

- **Gradual extension of experience**
This aspect focuses on the key content which students need to learn and be able to apply within each subject.
- **Progressive development of key concepts, ideas and skills**
It is important to ensure that students have understood ideas and concepts as they are introduced at specific points in the curriculum. These ideas and concepts will then be further developed, with links being made to new ones as they are introduced. It is important that the order of introduction and development is clearly thought out so that they make sense and build on each other. This also applies to the introduction and development of subject specific skills.
- **Increased complexity**
There should be a progressive increase in complexity so that students are challenged as they move through the school. To ensure that students are able to handle more complex ideas and concepts it is important that the extent to which students have grasped key ideas and concepts should be regularly assessed. While the recall of knowledge is important (and should also be checked) it is the application of knowledge which is more important.

Monitoring: This policy will be monitored by the Deputy Head, who will report on its implementation to the Headteacher and the Governors' Curriculum and Student Progress Committee on a regular basis.

Evaluation: Deputy Head – to provide annual results' analysis to the Leadership Team in late August and to the Governors (first meetings each academic year of the Curriculum and Student Progress Committee and Main Governors).

Adopted: May 2023

Review: Annually