



CURRICULUM POLICY AT HANLEY CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

1. Aim

- 1.1. To establish a learning experience for all students that inspires and is inclusive, appropriate to the abilities, talents and aspirations of individuals and successful in preparing students for the next step in their lives.
- 1.2. To deliver learning that leads to appropriate qualifications for the individual.
- 1.3. To support students in becoming:
 - Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve their full potential
 - Confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
 - Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society and respect their own and other cultures

2. Principles

- 2.1. Students should receive appropriate challenge so that they all have the opportunity to make progress and achieve their full potential. This is achieved through:
 - appropriate grouping, which includes setting by ability in those subjects where this strategy is deemed to be advantageous
 - a differentiated approach to learning in all classes
 - an appropriate learning pathway in KS4 and KS5
 - additional provision / support for the most able students and those with SEN/D (see separate policies)
- 2.2. Students should develop self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of succeeding at an appropriate academic level, aspiring towards their personal goals for each subject. They should also learn how to deal positively with appropriate challenge, and gain the skills to learn from their mistakes.
- 2.3. Students should gain skills and develop positive attitudes and attributes as well as acquiring knowledge and understanding as a result of a relevant curriculum. They should develop independence in their learning. They should have opportunities to develop their social, moral, spiritual and



cultural (SMSC) understanding to ensure their future success in an ever-changing global society. They should also develop a firm grasp of British Values.

- 2.4. As an Academy, the school has the entitlement to determine its own curriculum. However, we shall base our curriculum on the National Curriculum, making reasonable adjustment to meet the needs of our KS3 and KS4 students and the school ethos.
- 2.5. The available combinations of courses at KS4 and KS5 will be based on student preferences as indicated through the options processes, and as such will change from cohort to cohort.
- 2.6. Wherever possible, the school will provide progression of learning pathways from KS4 to KS5, or will support students in pursuing the most appropriate post-16 pathway elsewhere.
- 2.7. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) will be provided for all students in their KS3-4, post-16 and post-18 transitions.

3. Equal opportunities

- 3.1. Every student is entitled to access an appropriate curriculum, and individual learning needs should be met as far as possible.
- 3.2. Teachers should be aware of different learning needs and should design learning activities that enable all students to participate fully. To support this, lessons should have structure yet variety and be differentiated to challenge all students appropriately.
- 3.3. Students with specific physical needs are supported as fully as possible, in lessons, around the site and in assessment activities.
- 3.4. Students with specific learning needs are supported firstly by their teacher in their lessons, and where appropriate by the Aspire Department within lessons, in assessment and through specially designed programmes.
- 3.5. The school's Equality Policy details issues surrounding equal opportunities.

4. Curriculum Design – overview

- 4.1. The curriculum is designed over a 2-week timetable. This is to maximise flexibility in sixth form timetabling in particular and to enable discrete provision of subjects such as KS3 citizenship by specialist teachers.
- 4.2. Emphasis is placed on the 'core' subjects of Mathematics, English and Science throughout KS3 and KS4. The quality of learning is enhanced by enabling those departments to group students by ability or to design their own mixed ability groups as appropriate.



- 4.3. Computing is taught as a discrete subject throughout KS3 and KS4.
- 4.4. Religious Education is taught throughout KS3 and KS4 as a discrete subject.
- 4.5. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is taught across the whole school by Form Tutors. This is known as Personal and Social Development (PSD) in KS4, and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in KS5.
- 4.6. Physical Education (PE) is delivered 4 times per fortnight throughout KS3 and 4, and VI Form students have the opportunity to participate in Games Lessons once per week.
- 4.7. All subjects take opportunities to develop students' understanding of SMSC and incorporate personal learning and thinking skills such as independent enquiry, team working, reflective learning and self-management. Students are supported by their tutor to record examples where they have employed these skills and other attributes (both in and out of lessons) through our Bronze, Silver and Gold Pelican Learning Awards.

5. Curriculum Design – KS3 (Years 7 and 8)

- 5.1. The rationale for the KS3 curriculum is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all students. They experience a range of subjects, taught by specialist teachers, through which they develop skills, knowledge and understanding and are then able to make informed choices about their KS4 curriculum.
- 5.2. The KS3 timetable comprises 50 hour-long lessons per fortnight:
(*Illustration from KS3 2016-17*)

Subject	Year 7	Year 8
English	8	6
Mathematics	7	7
Science	6	6
Language(s)	5	7
Geography	3	3
History	3	3
Art	2	2
Citizenship	1	1
Drama*	1	1
Computing	2	2
Music	2	2
RE	2	2
Technology (incl. food and nutrition)*	3	3
P.S.H.E.	1	1
Physical Education	4	4



**indicates average over the year [taught as part of a rotation]*

- 5.3. Each year group is divided into two 'bands' of approximately equal ability.
- 5.4. **Grouping by ability:** Within each band students are grouped into 3 academic sets for **Maths, Science and Computing**. This happens from the start of Year 7 based on available attainment data and recommendations from students' primary school. There are several opportunities during Year 7 and Year 8 where set changes are considered in order to ensure that students are in the most appropriate teaching groups.
- 5.5. **Grouping by mixed ability:** Students are in 3 mixed ability groups per band for **English, Humanities and Arts** subjects.
- 5.6. All students study one **Language** in Year 7, grouped broadly by ability. Each band has 3 groups which study one of French, German or Spanish. The two languages studied rotates on a three-year cycle. Students with sufficient linguistic ability (4 of the 6 groups) start a second language in Year 8.
- 5.7. **Technology** subjects are taught in 4 groups per band to reduce the group size for safety reasons. The four areas of technology, including food and nutrition (cookery), are delivered on a rotation basis within each of Year 7 and 8.
- 5.8. **PE** is taught in 3 groups per band: one boys' group, one girls' group and one mixed gender group.
- 5.9. Students with SEN/D are taught in mainstream classes, albeit with additional support as directed by their identified needs.

6. Curriculum Design – KS4 (Years 9, 10 and 11)

- 6.1. **Rationale for a 3-yr KS4:** Our 3-year Key Stage 4 establishes students on the most suitable pathway of courses from Year 9. We have found that students show increased enjoyment, motivation and a wider curiosity around chosen subjects during Year 9. This approach provides time to develop a broader range of skills and explore the subject more deeply throughout the courses, and supports higher attainment by the end of Year 11. Students and parents are supported by an extensive programme of information, advice and guidance during Year 8 to support their choices.
- 6.2. **Core subjects:** All students study English, Mathematics and Science. Each subject is independently grouped by ability across the year in 6 sets, although in English the ability groupings are broader. All students also study Computing (in Maths sets), PSD, RE and PE (generally mixed ability groups).
- 6.3. **Pathways:** Each student follows one of the following pathways in addition to their core subjects:



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- **General GCSE:** choose one 'EBacc' subject (a GCSE in one of Geography, History, French, German or Spanish) plus any four other GCSE subjects. This pathway is for students who will succeed through written examination of traditional academic subjects.
- **GCSE with BTEC:** choose one 'EBacc' subject plus four other courses, which might include one or two BTEC subjects. BTECs are equivalent to GCSEs but are assessed mainly through ongoing assessments. They have a more practical 'vocational' focus (linked to real life) and rely less on exams. This pathway is for students who work hard and are good at their subjects but who find exams more challenging.
- **GCSE with EBacc:** The 'English Baccalaureate' is not an actual qualification, but is a collection of traditional, academic subjects that will support students who are aiming for the highest grades and who aspire to the very best universities. This pathway is therefore for our most able students. They take a language GCSE, a humanities GCSE then three other GCSEs of their choice.
- **BTEC:** In addition to their qualifications in maths, English and science from the core curriculum, students on this pathway will leave Year 11 with an ASDAN qualification in workplace skills and a combination of appropriate vocational and GCSE qualifications. They will also attend the Bridge centre in Hanley Swan in Years 10 and 11, from which they achieve a vocational qualification. This is an appropriate pathway for students who are better suited to practical work or work closely related to vocational occupations.

- 6.4. Students are recommended to follow one of the four pathways, based on the professional opinion of the KS3 team, their tutor and their subject teachers. This best matches their potential and preferred way of working to the most appropriate types of qualification.
- 6.5. Students opt for their subjects in order of preference and this then determines the combination of subjects available within each pathway. Students whose first choice combination of courses is not possible are supported by the KS3 office to find a suitable solution.
- 6.6. The KS4 timetable comprises 50 hour-long lessons per fortnight:

(Illustration from the cohort beginning y9 in Sept 2016)

Subject	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
English	7	8	8
Mathematics	6	6	6
Science	9	9	9
Computing	1	1	1
Citizenship / P.S.D. / R.E.	3	2	2



Physical Education	4	4	4
Option 1	4	4	4
Option 2	4	4	4
Option 3	4	4	4
Option 4	4	4	4
Option 5	4	4	4

7. Curriculum Design – KS5 (Years 12 and 13) – 16-19 Study Programmes

- 7.1 Students at HCHS follow a formal study programme of at least 540 hours per year. We aim for each student to be allocated at least 600 hours in Year 12. These hours are planned, organised and timetabled by the school. They comprise qualification hours (including timetabled independent study programmes) and value-adding non-qualification hours (such as IAG for progression / tutorial work, work experience, volunteering and other recognised activities).
- 7.2 Two qualification pathways are offered in the sixth form, either an A-level approach or a vocational (Level 3 BTEC) approach. Students may decide on an appropriate hybrid of these two pathways following discussion with the KS5 office.
- 7.3 Students who have not secured at least a GCSE grade C in either mathematics or English (or both) will continue with maths and/or English lessons whilst they are in our sixth form until they secure these thresholds.
- 7.4 A wide variety of courses are offered. Students opt for their subjects in order of preference and this then determines the combination of subjects available. Students whose first choice combination of courses is not possible are supported by the KS3 office to find a suitable solution.
- 7.5 From September 2016 students on the A-level pathway study 3 (or occasionally 4) subjects which they study as 2-year courses. This is to better meet the needs of reformed A-level specifications, although some un-reformed courses may still be studied as AS and A2 courses. Students in the Sept 2015 cohort tended to start with 4 (or occasionally 5) AS subjects in Year 12 and then continue with 3 or 4 subjects to the full A-level in Year 13. The exact number and type of qualification is agreed with the KS5 office to ensure that all students follow an appropriate curriculum in which they are able to succeed. Students including a vocational element in their curriculum negotiate this with the KS5 office.
- 7.6 Each 180 GLH (Guided Learning Hours) course is allocated up to 9 teaching hours per fortnight, depending upon the class size and the



course. Each course also includes an element of timetabled independent learning in addition to homework activities.

- 7.7 All students have 1 hour per fortnight with their Tutor for Information, Advice and Guidance in addition to 30 minutes of 'tutor time' per day.
- 7.8 The most able students are offered an Extended Project Qualification in addition to their options. This is aimed to help them secure places in the top universities.
- 7.9 VI Form Games is timetabled on Wednesday afternoons.
- 7.10 Work experience is undertaken by all students at the end of year 12.

8. Gifted and Talented students

- 8.1. Our Gifted and Talented policy sets out how we challenge, support and monitor the progress of our most able (gifted) students, and those who have talents in particular areas of the curriculum.

9. Information, Advice and Guidance

- 9.1. Students and their parents are supported in curriculum decisions throughout their time at Hanley Castle High School. This is to ensure that at every stage they are following the most appropriate curriculum to succeed, and that they all have a progression route once they leave the school.
- 9.2. Support is provided for each Key Stage transition through specific curriculum activities, assemblies, small group and individual meetings, parents evenings and communication between Key Stage offices and parents / students.
- 9.3. Information is provided via the school website.

10. Curriculum Review

- 10.1. The curriculum offer is reviewed on an annual basis. The precise way in which students are grouped for each subject may be adjusted year on year as a result of restrictions encountered during the timetabling process.

11. Links to other policies

- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Special Educational Needs, Disability and Inclusion Policy
- Gifted and Talented Policy
- Equality Policy
- Assessment Policy



- Homework Policy
- IAG incorporating PSHE policy
- SMSC policy