



# HANLEY CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL



## CURRICULUM POLICY

JUNE 2020

**Review Frequency:** Every 3 Years  
**Date Reviewed:** May 2020  
**Date Approved by ASC:** June 2020

**Date of Next Review:** June 2023  
**Staff responsible:**

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## 1 Aim

- 1.1. To establish an appropriately ambitious learning experience for all students based on the principles in our '**Curriculum Purpose Statement**' [see Appendix]. This policy focuses primarily on the academic curriculum, and cannot do justice to the rich and varied experience planned through the rigorously supported whole school experience / 'hidden' curriculum (also termed "social capital"), or offered through trips, visits and additional activities.
- 1.2. To provide all students with a broad range of knowledge (and skills), beyond that acquired through experiences in their daily lives, which can inform their opinions about the world and will help them to make decisions about their next steps in education or training. This is often termed "**cultural capital**".
- 1.3. To deliver learning that leads to success in appropriate qualifications for the individual, thereby building self-esteem and self-confidence.

## 2 Principles - intent

- 2.1 As an Academy, the school has the entitlement to determine its own curriculum. However, we base our curriculum on the National Curriculum, making reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of our KS3 and KS4 students and the school ethos.
- 2.2 The whole-school **curriculum purpose statement** is written collaboratively between SLT and subject leaders. Based on this, each subject creates their own curriculum purpose statement, identifying key principles (also termed "**powerful knowledge**") and how they are aiming to develop the domain-specific way of thinking, working and learning for their subject area. It identifies the knowledge and skills to be gained at specific 'end-points' (initially by the end of KS3, KS4 and KS5). All curriculum purpose statements are published on the school website.
- 2.3 All subjects carefully consider the **sequencing** of ideas within their subject, and have contributed to the mapping of ideas between subjects in KS3 to support students' development of robust schema.
- 2.4 The school operates a **3-year Key Stage 4**. Rationale:
  - 2.4.1 Maintains a greater breadth of curriculum until the end of year 11 by HCHS students, students taking an additional subject when compared to peers in most schools.
  - 2.4.2 Increased enjoyment, motivation and a wider curiosity around chosen subjects during Year 9. This results in a deeper understanding of "powerful knowledge" in these subjects.
  - 2.4.3 The KS3 National Curriculum content is covered in Years 7 and 8 by ensuring a generous allocation of time to humanities, MFL and arts subjects [rather than narrowing the curriculum by placing a disproportionate emphasis on mathematics and English].
  - 2.4.4 The Year 9 curriculum is enhanced by '**cultural capital days**' which ensure that all students experience *at least* the knowledge outlined in the KS3 National Curriculum by the end of year 9.
- 2.5 **Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)** is delivered as part of the curriculum in line with the Gatsby benchmarks, and particularly supports students' transition between key stages. [See the current School Careers Strategy & Action Plan on the school website].
- 2.6 **Alternative curriculum** is provided as part of the planned KS4 curriculum for a small number of our more vulnerable students at a registered local provider. Safeguarding procedures, safety and quality of provision are monitored annually by the school, supported by regular student updates from the provider. Occasionally individuals are supported in accessing other alternative providers, depending on their specific needs.
- 2.7 Students 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**, enhanced by assembly themes and the ‘hidden curriculum’ / school ethos (including, for example, the illustration of democracy through voting for student leadership).

- 2.8 Wherever possible, the school will provide learning pathway progression from KS4 to KS5, or will support students in pursuing the most appropriate post-16 pathway elsewhere.

### 3 Principles – implementation

3.1 This is covered more specifically in the *Teaching and Learning Policy*. However:

- Subjects are encouraged to consider the complexity of the ideas that they teach as **composites**, considering the impact of a forgotten aspect or a misconception in a previously taught component, and to build this into their planning.
- This is supported by the principle of regular activities for retrieval of important facts (also termed “**sticky knowledge**”), to develop fluency, strengthen long-term memory and reduce cognitive load as new ideas are developed.

### 4 Equal opportunities

4.1 The school’s Equality Policy details issues surrounding equal opportunities.

4.2 Every student is entitled to access an appropriate curriculum, and individual learning needs should be met as far as practically possible.

4.3 Students with SEN/D are taught in mainstream classes, albeit with additional support as directed by their identified needs. Additional intervention is co-ordinated by ‘Aspire’, our SEN department.

4.4 No child is denied access to the full curriculum as a result of ‘disadvantage’. The school implements advice from the Educational Psychologist, CAMHS, Targeted Family Support (etc) to appropriately amend the curriculum for those individuals with SEN/D or who are vulnerable as a result of their mental health / emotional wellbeing.

4.5 Teachers are made aware of different learning needs through SIMS marksheets and should design learning activities that enable all students to participate fully.

4.6 Students with specific physical needs are supported as fully as possible, in lessons, around the site and in assessment activities.

4.7 Students with specific learning needs are supported firstly by their teacher in their lessons, and where appropriate by the Aspire Department within lessons. Students requiring additional support for assessments are assisted by the Aspire Department to establish a ‘normal way of working’ for terminal / external assessments. Some students are also supported through specially designed programmes.

4.8 Teachers attempt to close the nationally recognised gap between disadvantaged students and their non-disadvantaged peers, particularly through a focus on vocabulary.

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

## 5 Timetabling the curriculum – overview

- 5.1 The timetable is designed over a 2-week cycle. 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.
- 5.2 **Computing** is taught as a discrete subject in KS3.
- 5.3 **Religious Education** is taught in KS3 and KS4 as a discrete subject. Some aspects are also delivered through PSD, citizenship and through additional activities such as a ‘multi-faith day’.
- 5.4 **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 KS3 / KS4, and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in KS5.
- 5.5 **Physical Education (PE)** is delivered 4 times per fortnight throughout KS3 and KS4, and VI Form students have the opportunity to participate in Games Lessons once per week.
- 5.6 All subjects take opportunities to promote students’ **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC)** development 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**.

## 6 Time allocation and grouping – KS3 (Years 7 and 8)

- 6.1 The KS3 timetable comprises 50 hour-long lessons per fortnight:  
(*Illustration from KS3 2020-21*)

| Subject                                | Year 7 | Year 8 |
|--|--------|--------|
| English                                | 8      | 7      |
| Mathematics                            | 7      | 6      |
| Science                                | 6      | 6      |
| Language(s)                            | 5      | 7      |
| Geography, History, RE                 | 8      | 8      |
| Art                                    | 2      | 2      |
| Citizenship                            | 1      | 1      |
| Drama*                                 | 1      | 1      |
| Computing                              | 2      | 2      |
| Music                                  | 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]*

- 6.2 Each year group is divided into two ‘bands’ of approximately equal ability.
- 6.3 **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.
- 6.4 **Grouping by mixed ability:** Students are in 3 mixed ability groups per band for **English, Humanities and Arts** subjects.

- 6.5 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.
- 6.6 **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.
- 6.7 **PE** is taught in 3 groups per band: one boys' group, one girls' group and one mixed gender group.

## 7 Time allocation and grouping – KS4 (Years 9, 10 and 11)

- 7.1 **Core subjects:** All students study English, Mathematics and Science. Each subject is independently grouped by ability across the year in 6 sets (7 for Mathematics when possible), although in English the ability groupings are broader. All students also study PSD, RE and PE.
- 7.2 **Pathways:** In addition to the core subjects, student follows 5 additional accredited courses, based on one of the four pathways [see KS4 pathways section of the school website]. The pathways support students in selecting an ambitious yet appropriate combination of subjects, promoting at least one EBacc subject for almost all students and both a humanities and MFL subject for the majority. 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, although this is always just a starting point for students and parents and may be negotiated with the KS3 team who know them well.
- 7.3 The combination of option subjects in each timetable block is determined for each cohort on a best-fit basis, using student choices. Hence the curriculum is personalised.
- 7.4 The KS4 timetable comprises 50 hour-long lessons per fortnight:

*(Illustration from KS4 2020-21)*

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

## 8 Curriculum Design – KS5 (Years 12 and 13) – 16-19 Study Programmes

- 8.1 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).
- 8.2 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.

- 8.3 Students who have not secured at least a GCSE grade 4 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.
- 8.4 A wide variety of courses are offered and students opt for their subjects in order of preference. Uptake then determine which courses run and the combination of subjects in each timetable block is determined for each cohort on a best-fit basis, using student choices.
- 8.5 Students study 3 (or occasionally 4) subjects which they study as 2-year courses. This is to best meet the needs of reformed A-level specification. 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.
- 8.6 Each 180 GLH (Guided Learning Hours) course is allocated 9 teaching hours per fortnight (or occasionally 8 hours, depending upon the class size and the course). Each course also includes an element of timetabled independent learning in addition to homework activities.
- 8.7 All students have 1 hour per fortnight with the sixth form tutor team for Information, Advice and Guidance (relevant to their future aspirations) in addition to 30 minutes of structured 'tutor time' per day. This combined time will provide specific and tailored support for their chosen career pathway.
- 8.8 An Extended Project Qualification is offered in addition to students' main options. This is aimed to help them secure places in the most prestigious universities.
- 8.9 VI Form Games is timetabled on Wednesday afternoons.
- 8.10 Work experience is undertaken by all students at the end of year 12.

## **9 Curriculum Review**

- 9.1 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.

## **10 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
- School Careers Strategy & Action Plan

## **11 Appendix 1: HCHS Curriculum Purpose Statement – v1**

### **Whole school experience**

Through belonging to our school community and through our broader curriculum we aim for Hanley students to develop a strong sense of positive values, to be confident and resilient and to become kind, community-minded citizens who are aware of bigger issues in the world. More than that, we encourage them to be ambitious and to strive to taking a lead in society to make a difference.

### **Academic Curriculum**

The core purpose and function of HCHS is the academic progress of all students, beyond knowledge acquired through experiences in their daily lives, and aspiring to achieve excellent examination outcomes. Our role is to provide a bridge between students' prior learning and the specialised knowledge which has developed over time to underpin human cultures and societies. We believe that by exposing all young people to the specific way of working and best way of learning in different subject disciplines we help them to be curious about and make sense of concepts developed by expert communities in their respective fields.

### **How?**

We provide a broad and inspiring KS3 curriculum, rich in literature, mathematics, the sciences, humanities and arts, to consider the very best of each subject without being constrained by external examination specifications. We take all reasonable steps to fulfil our moral imperative to provide additional support for those significantly behind their peers in terms of literacy, numeracy or emotional needs, and to support the accelerated progress of those who have been disadvantaged by limited prior experience or vocabulary. We also provide opportunities for those with particularly enquiring minds to explore areas beyond the main curriculum.

Students are aware of their strengths by the end of year 8, and so in addition to a common core a carefully-tailored approach to the KS4 curriculum is taken from Year 9 whilst strongly encouraging EBacc subjects. Breadth of learning is maintained to the end of Year 11 by students studying more GCSEs than at many other schools, alongside a full range of extra-curricular activities that allow them to maintain their interests in areas such as music, drama and sport where these are not choices for formal study.

In addition, the timetabled curriculum is enhanced for year 9 students by 'cultural capital' days – opportunities for students to acquire knowledge about significant ideas and achievements and their role in shaping our wider world.

We celebrate the distinct knowledge and skills developed in different areas of the curriculum, and encourage teachers to adopt the most effective techniques to support students' learning and assessment in these different disciplines. Subject specialists aim to inspire through delivering the very best their subject has to offer.

Within subjects, we sequence important concepts to build understanding and make links to previous and future learning, thereby supporting progress and helping students to recall and organise their knowledge in their long-term memory. Where possible we make links between knowledge in different subjects and develop common approaches to the delivery of similar skills.