



Mark Hall Academy

Aspire, Endeavour, Achieve

Curriculum Policy

It was approved by the Local Governing Body on	9 February 2016
This policy will be reviewed	January 2018
This policy will be reviewed by:	ALT & Principal

CURRICULUM POLICY

POLICY

The curriculum at The Mark Hall Academy embraces a wide range of learning opportunities for every student. It includes what is offered in formal, time-tabled lessons as well as the wealth of extra-curricular activities and experiences promoted or supported by the academy.

The Academy's Curriculum Policy reflects the commitment to the provision of the National Curriculum, but it also places an emphasis on the development of the positive attitudes towards learning and the necessary skills involved.

The structure of the curriculum will ensure that students are able to achieve levels of literacy and numeracy that are appropriate to allow them to access the rest of the curriculum. The curriculum will ensure that all students are able to progress at a rate that is in line with their ability.

PURPOSE

The curriculum exists to provide an overarching framework that translates the values and aims of the academy into effective learning and teaching. It seeks to ensure that all students can access a personalised learning experience as part of a lifelong process through which all learners can achieve their potential and meet or exceed their expectations. The curriculum is designed to be relevant to all learners to provide the support and challenge required and to meet the interests and needs of students.

PRINCIPLES

Every student will have the opportunity to encounter a range of learning experiences which:

- meet the needs of all learners and are of the highest possible quality;
- take account of unequal starting points;
- provide diversity by catering for students' needs, aspirations and ability;
- are provided irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, ethnic background or disability;
- will be reviewed annually to take account of national developments, syllabus requirements as well as reflecting changing technologies and local opportunities.

Students will benefit from a curriculum that is well-planned and co-ordinated to provide breadth, balance, depth and relevance and which acknowledges the need for progress and continuity in order to build on the learning experiences of the individual. The curriculum is designed to encourage students to develop positive relationships, self-confidence and healthy lifestyles. It will promote their social, moral, spiritual and cultural education as well as the mental and physical development of students at Mark Hall Academy.

Through a range of challenging, supportive and some extended learning experiences, the curriculum will aim to develop and extend students to enable them to achieve their potential in all areas of academy life and to learn and develop those skills that promote enterprising behaviour, independent and lifelong learning. The academy is building and developing extended learning experiences as part of their commitment towards delivering a World Class Curriculum.

Students will participate in a curriculum that will develop their personal qualities and skills and raise their aspirations, so that they can contribute effectively and confidently to life in and out of school and which will prepare them for an effective, purposeful, responsible and enjoyable adult and working life.

All students will receive mentoring, information, advice and guidance to enable them to make informed choices from the wide range of subjects, assessment and accreditation routes available through the curriculum; taking into account progression routes for students into further education or the world of work. This will be particularly important at the transition from key stage three to key stage four, where we will engage with students, parents and carers to ensure all students make well informed choices.

All students will be prepared carefully and thoroughly for public examinations, statutory tests and other accredited qualifications. Increasingly, the academy will be using Walking, Talking, Mocks to build exam competency and stamina in support of the new linear qualifications.

Effective teaching and learning will be the main concern of the Academy Leadership Team (ALT) and resources will be appropriately allocated annually to meet the demands of subject needs.

AIMS

- The aim is to provide the students with a curriculum that will enable all young people to become:
 - successful learners, who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
 - confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives;
 - responsible global citizens who make a positive contribution to society;
 - citizens who understand how to make good choices in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle;
 - enthusiastic about engaging in further education, employment or training on leaving school.

- The curriculum is designed to:
 - motivate and engage learners and to help them succeed;
 - develop a learning culture where students and staff work together in a vibrant and exciting 21st century learning environment using new technologies effectively;
 - ensure that learners gain the knowledge and functional skills in English, Maths and ICT that they need for education, employment and life;
 - ensure that assessment supports teaching and learning, providing more opportunities for focused support, stretch and challenge where needed;
 - be flexible in order to personalise learning to meet the needs of all students and to increase the opportunities for them to be involved more actively in their own learning;
 - enable a smooth progression from primary, through secondary and beyond;
 - develop 'Personal, Learning and Thinking' skills;
 - develop coherent learning experiences that are relevant and meaningful to learners by making connections between subjects, events and activities;
 - provide the widest range of choice through partnerships in the locality where appropriate;
 - be broad, balanced, relevant, progressive and differentiated;
 - build on students' prior experiences, skills, knowledge and understanding;

- be used as a tool to nurture students' aspirations by providing very strong and visible progression routes into higher education, further education and employment;
- be effectively utilised to deliver all elements of the social and emotional aspects of learning.

CURRICULAR AIMS

The curriculum will:

- prepare students for post-16 education, vocational needs and leisure and recreational habits;
- provide a breadth and relevance of learning opportunities for all abilities;
- challenge each student to strive for excellence in his or her own terms;
- provide a mixture of directed, investigative and interactive learning which ensures equality of access and opportunity for all students, in a variety of appropriate teaching and learning styles;
- provide factual content and develop cross-curricular skills and knowledge, information communication technology and language;
- provide programmes of study with sufficient breadth as well as depth; enabling students to develop deeper level learning;
- stimulate academic and physical progress and personal development;
- emphasise the 'wholeness' of the learning experience and its pleasures and rewards and thus develop self-motivation;
- emphasise the importance of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum;
- ensure students recognise the importance of spelling, punctuation and grammar in all written work;
- emphasise the place of technology across the curriculum and its relevance to the whole community;
- provide opportunities to develop the skills of oracy;
- ensure that the Special Educational Needs' Code of Practice meets the requirements of all students irrespective of their academic abilities or needs;
- acknowledge that people come from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds and promote tolerance through an effective pastoral organisation;
- ensure that all students can benefit from all the resources that the academy can offer;
- foster a considered approach to choices to be made both within a student's school life and at 16+ and 18+;
- develop a sense of responsibility for their own growth by reflecting on and evaluating the whole range of their learning and development.

CURRICULUM BY KEY STAGE

KS3

- In Key Stage 3 the full range of National Curriculum subjects are studied. In addition, the academy is committed to developing a Personalised Curriculum starting in Key Stage 3. Setting is employed to match the work set to students' academic needs. Students will be set in English, Mathematics and Science from Year 7 onwards. In the foundation subjects, students will be set appropriately.
- Appropriate courses for students will initially be decided on by using evidence from primary data and transition unit assessments. The decision on courses will be agreed with students and parents/carers forming the basis of each student's individual learning plan.

KS4

- In Key Stage 4 students currently follow courses leading to a variety of qualifications including GCSE, BTEC. A coherent approach to curriculum development is employed to ensure the provision of the widest range of opportunities for students. Students are encouraged to study a

specialist subject but the needs, interests and aptitude of individual students are paramount. Students are offered differentiated pathways so that all students have opportunities to enjoy, make progress and achieve, whilst meeting expected government thresholds

- All students will be expected to study the core subjects of English, English Literature, Mathematics and Double Science. Some students will have the opportunity to study Triple Science, depending on their attainment in Science and Maths in Year 9. Students on the Mark Pathway will be expected to study subjects from the EBacc suite, including a language and either history or geography. Students on the Hall and Academy pathways are able to choose subjects from the EBacc suite; all students are expected to pick one from this suite to meet the bucket 2 criteria and to provide a balanced curriculum. In addition, students will also be able to choose additional options to support their progression routes, personal interests and individual needs
- Where students have particular additional needs we try to personalise the curriculum so that all students have a chance to succeed. At all stages we try to be flexible and involve the student and parents / carers in all decisions
- Students will be set by ability in English, Mathematics and Science
- Option groups will be mixed ability; where the opportunity arises subject leaders can organise setting by ability

Early entry of GCSE examinations

- Mark Hall should enter students when they are ready
- Mark Hall should be mindful of a one size fits all approach and the impact this has on performance
- Readiness for an examination is when a student will achieve or exceed their target grade
- Mark Hall should take into account prior attainment and progress data if a student is entered early
- Higher ability students should not jeopardise their opportunity to reach the top grades by sitting examination subjects early
- Mark Hall should ensure students are well prepared for their next stage in education, employment and training and, consequently, early entry should not impede students' progression routes

Progress 8 measure

- Progress 8 will be introduced for all schools in 2016 (based on 2016 exam results, with the Progress 8 score showing in performance tables published in late 2016/early 2017).
- The Progress 8 measure is designed to encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum at KS4 and reward schools for the teaching of all their students. The new measure will be based on students' progress measured across eight subjects: English, mathematics, three other English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects (sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages); and three further subjects, which can be from the range of EBacc subjects, or can be any other approved, high-value arts, academic, or vocational qualification. From 2016, the floor standard will be based on schools' results on the Progress 8 measure.
- Other information will be available about schools, including the following headline measures of performance:
 - **Attainment 8** - showing students' average achievement in the same suite of subjects as the Progress 8 measure.
 - **English and mathematics** – the percentage of students achieving a grade 5 or better in both English (either Language or Literature) and mathematics.

- **The EBacc** – showing the percentage of students achieving good grades across a range of academic subjects (further information about this measure is below).

How many qualifications will count towards the Progress 8 measure?

- Although Progress 8 encourages students to take eight qualifications, this is not compulsory. If a student has fewer than eight qualifications or the qualifications they do sit are not on the list of subjects which count towards Progress 8, they will score 0 points for the unfilled slots.
- The Progress 8 score will always be determined by dividing the points total by 10 (the eight qualifications with English and mathematics counting double), regardless of how many qualifications the student sits or in which subjects.
- It can be of more benefit to less-able students to strive for good grades (and hence score more points) in fewer subjects, with the emphasis on doing well in English and mathematics, than to take more subjects but achieve lower grades overall.

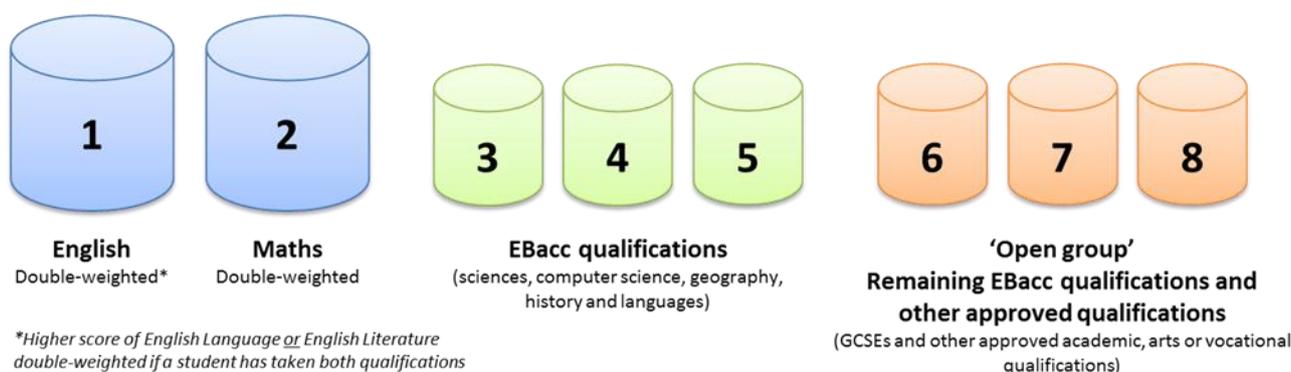
Qualifications that will count towards the Progress 8 measure

All full-course GCSEs count towards the Progress 8 measure, along with approved, high-value qualifications.

English Baccalaureate qualifications

- Only qualifications that count towards the EBacc can be included in the Progress 8 slots reserved for English, mathematics, and the three ‘EBacc slots’.
- There are no stipulations about the types of EBacc subjects which can count in the three EBacc slots. Any combination of EBacc subjects can be used to fill these slots, e.g. biology, chemistry physics; computer science, French, German; history, geography, Spanish.
- Up to three vocational qualifications can count towards the Progress 8 measure. As the Progress 8 measure will comprise eight subjects rather than the five in the current headline measure of school performance, it is proportionate to increase the number of vocational qualifications that will be allowed from two to three.
- In the open group of subjects, any GCSE can count, or any of the high-value, approved vocational and academic qualifications shown at this link: [Vocational qualifications for 14- to 19-year olds](#).

Progress 8 measure



Discounting

Discounting codes will apply to qualifications that cover similar subject matter.

Double-weighting of English

- Students sit both English Language and English Literature; the higher grade is double-weighted. The lower grade will still be eligible to count in the 'open group' of subjects (not in the EBacc slots). The combined English Language and Literature qualification will be available for the last time in 2016 and will count double in the Progress 8 measure on the basis that there is an element of Literature study in the qualification.

Science subjects

- All students have to study science up to the age of 16. The KS4 science curriculum is compulsory in maintained schools and academies are required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum (including English, mathematics and science up to the age of 16.)
- Double science will count as two slots, and For current Year 11, Core and additional science GCSE will take up one slot each in the Progress 8 measure. Students studying 'Triple Science', will have an additional GCSE in science which is only eligible in the Open slot. Core science GCSE alone will only count as one slot.
- For current Year 10 and other years moving forward, double/combined Science GCSE will take up two slots in the Progress 8 measure. Some students will have the opportunity to study Triple Science; this counts as three separate GCSEs in biology, chemistry and physics. All these qualifications will count in the EBacc slots in this measure. Students who are capable of achieving good grades should be encouraged to sit individual science subjects.

EBacc measure

- The EBacc measure will continue to be reported once Progress 8 is in place
- The EBacc recognises the success of those young people who attain GCSEs, or accredited versions of established iGCSEs, at grades A*-C or 9-5 across a core of academic subjects - English, mathematics, geography or history, the qualifying sciences and a language. To fulfil the EBacc, a student would need A*-C or 9-5 in English, mathematics, two sciences, a humanities and a language
- To achieve the science element of EBacc, students need to achieve A*-C in core and additional science or 9-5 in the double/combined science. Alternatively, students would need to gain a 9-5 in any two of the three separate, triple sciences

PSHRE, Citizenship and SMSC will be delivered in a variety of ways:

- Deep Learning/Curriculum days throughout the year
- Discreet PSHRE lessons twice a week during Home Group Learning
- Seminar style discussions addressing issues such as LGBT, Mental Health
- Assemblies and outside agencies delivering a range of activities for example; Reality roadshow, Mock interview (CEIAG), cyber bullying
- Across the curriculum in lessons and around the Academy via Noticeboards, forums such as student voice and the Diversity group

ICT/Computing is delivered in one hour lessons at KS3 and at KS4 the programmes of study are covered through the option schemes of work. Statutory requirements for the use of ICT in each subject area should be met by all subject areas. It is the responsibility of the Coordinators to make sure this entitlement is met.

Sex and Drugs education is delivered in a variety of ways:

- Through science;
- PSHRE programmes;

- Supported by external agencies and through assemblies

(See separate policies for Drugs Education and Sex and Relationships)

CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT DAYS

Themed days enable topics to be studied in depth, allowing for cross-curricular initiatives and enrichment activities such as theatre visits, educational visits and interschool competitions. This programme focuses students' attention on the learning of skills rather than content and encourages the transference of thinking approaches across subjects and to everyday life. The programme supports the development of social emotional aspects of learning.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The comprehensive Enrichment Programme is used to engage students in some curricular areas and to enhance students' performance. Accreditation to National bodies is encouraged.

TRANSITION ACROSS KEY STAGES

KS2 – KS3

All new students are interviewed in the summer term by a member of the Academy staff. The data collected is used by the Academy to ensure effective transition from primary school. Students attend an induction day in the summer term and all subject areas will have specific transition units in place, these will set high expectations across the Academy in order to avoid a Year 7/8 dip in progress. A summer academy will operate, normally, during the final week of the summer holidays.

KS3 – KS4

GCSEs and BTECs form the basis of the curriculum at Key Stage 4. Good advice and guidance on future pathways (options) is crucial at this stage. During Years 8 and 9 part of the academic mentoring programme will be addressing "choices and pathways". Additionally, the Work Related Learning (WRL) support offered through our Careers Guidance lead and our independent careers advisor (Direction) support students in their next steps and key decisions. We interview students where possible and parents/carers will have the opportunity to receive up to date advice and guidance in order to support their son/daughter at this stage. Learning Tutors will support students in making their choices and will use Academy data and other information to help advise on the most appropriate choices. *We continue to ask students for their input and feedback with regard to careers and support, we offer Fast Tomato, an online resource as well as home group interview slots and attendance at all parents evenings.*

College link courses and alternative provision packages are available for some students. These courses are used to combat disaffection helping students to stay in education or avoid exclusion.

Casual admissions will be assessed for English and Mathematics one week before they are put on roll. The Heads of English and Mathematics are responsible for setting and marking the assessments. Students will then be placed in appropriate groups for their ability, taking particular care where students have English as an additional language (EAL).

SCHEMES OF WORK

It is very important that through our curriculum, students receive high quality teaching and learning experiences in all areas. A fundamental requirement is that each department must have in place a detailed scheme of work, which addresses knowledge, skills and understanding as well as clear strands of differentiation for all ability levels.

Schemes of work should be related to clear assessment criteria and should be mapped in line with the new GCSE specifications; testing and assessment opportunities, against these criteria, should also be mapped out as part of the schemes of work.

Subject areas will also have a 6 week overview as part of their scheme of work. These must clearly identify the cross curricular skills of Literacy, Maths across the Curriculum (MAC), ICT, SMSC, PSHE and Citizenship. They must also take into consideration the vulnerable groups of students (Pupil Premium, EAL, SEND, CiC) to ensure high quality differentiation.

A copy of each subject area's schemes of work should be available for line managers at the start of each year. This will include an overview of the year which includes the framework for assessment, 6 x 6 weekly plans showing cross curricular coverage and key learning objectives for each unit. The long term plans for all faculties will be placed on the Mark Hall Academy website. Following reviews of Schemes of Work, subject specifications for all faculties will be placed on the Mark Hall academy website and all students will receive a copy at the start of the year to support them in developing their independent learning and familiarity with using exam board style documents.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES

The Policy embraces policies and procedures for admissions, assessment, Careers Education Information and Guidance (CEIAG), charging, collective worship, drug education, equal opportunities, gifted and talented, health and safety, homework, performance management, race equality, school visits, DSEN, sex education, staff discipline, Behaviour/Culture for Learning, Attendance and Learning and Teaching.

MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The curriculum will be reviewed and evaluated annually by the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Standards), the Academy Leadership team, the Heads of Department and the Student Voice to ensure it matches the interests, aptitudes and special needs of all its students.

The Governing Body will receive regular reports on:

- Teaching and Learning initiatives
- The standards reached in each subject, by every year group against national averages and similar schools
- The standards achieved at the end of each Key Stage compared with national and local benchmarks
- The evidence of the impact of strategies on standards

GOVERNORS' ROLE

The Governing Body will ensure that:

- All statutory elements of the curriculum are met
- Any disapplications to the curriculum are considered to ensure that, where appropriate, this course of action best meets the individual needs of students
- It considers the advice of the Principal when approving curriculum changes and when setting statutory and non-statutory targets
- Progress towards annual statutory targets is monitored
- It participates actively in decision-making about the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- It is advised on statutory targets in order to make informed decisions