



# **Hardenhuish School Curriculum Policy**

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# Hardenhuish School

## Curriculum Policy

### 1. CURRICULUM MISSION

The school's overarching mission is for all Hardenhuish pupils and students to become independent life-long learners, empowered with the knowledge and skills to thrive in a changing world. Our broad and balanced curriculum will develop our young people to be confident communicators with the reflectiveness, resilience and reciprocity to be effective leaders and team-players who set and achieve ambitious goals. We will nurture and challenge our pupils and students to become principled global citizens, committed to making a positive contribution to their community, including the areas of environmental sustainability and social justice. Our mission will be demonstrated through all of our young people being inspired to learn and supported to succeed during their time at Hardenhuish so that they lead happy, fulfilled and successful lives in the future.

### 2. CURRICULUM VALUES

#### 2.1 The value of breadth

The school is committed to providing a broad and stimulating curriculum which enables wide ranging individual talents to flourish and doors to be opened to future opportunities. We value the distinctiveness of individual subjects and believe that offering a wide range of disciplines and learning experiences is vital for our young people. Each subject is part of the curriculum because it develops specific knowledge and skills that are different from other subjects.

#### 2.2. The value of depth and challenge for all

We also place great importance on the cognitive development that results from studying a subject in great depth. The challenge of understanding complex and abstract concepts, processes and cause and effect relationships develops new skills and ways of thinking that are not accessed by more superficial learning. For this reason, our expert and specialist staff often teach beyond the syllabus and offer a huge range of enrichment activities, trips and visits to extend learning.

#### 2.3 The value of balance

An optimum balance of learning time is allocated to the different components of the curriculum to reflect their value to the education of our young people. At the heart of the Hardenhuish curriculum lies an academic core of traditional subjects, reflected by the greater time dedicated to learning in English, maths, science, computing, modern foreign languages and the humanities. However, this is not at the expense of the expressive and performing arts, design technologies and physical education which all enjoy a high profile in every key stage. The carefully planned element of choice in our curriculum, which starts as early as Year 9, recognises that the value and balance of different components of the curriculum may vary for individual learners.

#### 2.4 The value of knowledge

Our curriculum is underpinned by a knowledge-rich approach, where the invaluable knowledge that we want our pupils and students to acquire is clearly defined, prioritised and respected. Of greatest importance is the powerful knowledge which enables learners to develop thinking that takes them beyond their own experiences so that they can explain, predict and envisage alternatives. Such knowledge only becomes powerful when it is robust and is remembered. Therefore, the building blocks of learning are carefully sequenced with an emphasis on spaced learning and retrieval practice to help pupils and students remember what they have been taught. Furthermore, through an explicit focus on metacognition, we teach our pupils and students to understand themselves as learners and how to best develop and apply their knowledge.

## **2.5 The value of choice**

The curriculum is designed to offer pupils and students a diverse and coherent choice of courses and learning experiences to maximise engagement and achievement so that our young people leave Hardenhuish with the best possible outcomes for their next steps. Two fundamental guiding principles which apply to when our young people are making curriculum choices are (1) our impartial advice and guidance always centres on the best interests of the individual rather than headline performance measures; and (2) the quality of the learning experience and outcomes achieved is more important than the quantity of qualifications achieved. We are committed to an inclusive curriculum with equality of access and the flexibility to provide personalised learning pathways which are tailored to the individual needs of the young person, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. This is demonstrated by the breadth of our academic and vocational offer and the free options system which we operate to maximise the number of learners who are able to study the courses of their choice.

## **2.6 The value of the whole curriculum**

We strive to offer a holistic education which develops the whole person. Of equal importance to intellectual development through the academic curriculum is the value we place on supporting the development of physical and emotional wellbeing and spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. This is taught explicitly through our Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) programme which is given a high profile through dedicated weekly lessons in Key Stage 3 and 4, as well as through our Successful Lives curriculum that is delivered during daily tutor time. It is essential that pupils and students are encouraged to think synoptically through the creation of links and application of learning from one subject to another. This is achieved through our engaging cross-curricular enrichment days and through the large range of extra-curricular activities, including our very popular Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

## **3. CURRICULUM INTENT**

The intent of a curriculum is the knowledge, skills and understanding a school wants its pupils to develop. We are committed to providing a curriculum which is underpinned by our 6 values in order to achieve our curriculum mission, as outlined above. It is important that the curriculum mission and values are applied at a whole school scale, on an individual subject level and within each teacher's day to day practice.

It is our policy to provide religious education (RE), in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus, as well as relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), in accordance with the DfE's statutory guidance introduced in 2020. RE, HRSE and Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) are delivered through our PSHCE programme. Further information about this programme, including parents' right to withdraw their child from parts of this area of the curriculum, can be found in the RE and RSHE policies.

### **3.1 Key Stage 3**

As an academy, Hardenhuish School is free from the statutory requirement to provide the National Curriculum and may choose its own curriculum as long as it is broad and balanced and includes English, Maths and Science, as per the Academies Act 2010. However, the school continues to provide a curriculum in which the discrete subjects of the National Curriculum are taught to all pupils during a three-year Key Stage 3. Additional curriculum time in Year 7 given to Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) now enables both French and Spanish to be taught to the vast majority of Year 7 pupils.

A special feature of the Year 9 curriculum is that pupils have the opportunity to choose two subjects from a range of over ten options which further enhances the breadth of our offer. At the same time this gives pupils valuable experience of trying some subjects they might want to study at GCSE, including subjects they may not have tried before such as business studies.

### **3.2 Key Stage 4**

The strong academic core provided by the EBacc lies at the heart of our Key Stage 4 curriculum together with a broad and balanced range of optional qualifications, including our vocational courses. Please refer to the KS4 Options Policy for further details. All pupils study the core subjects of English, maths, science, PE and PSHCE, as well as at least one subject from computing, French, Spanish, geography or history. While it is strongly encouraged that the majority of pupils do the full EBacc combination of subjects, it is not compulsory because we believe strongly that the EBacc curriculum, in particular the MFL component, does not always set pupils up for the most successful outcomes at GCSE. The increased curriculum time given to MFL in Key Stage 3 reflects

the school's ambition to increase the proportion of pupils studying French and/or Spanish and, therefore, the full EBacc at GCSE.

An important outcome of Key Stage 4 is to ensure that the curriculum builds towards an end point that will enable our young people to progress to further education or training. Without doubt, the most important knowledge and skills are those in literacy and numeracy which is why a coherent series of intervention programmes are integrated into our KS3 and KS4 curriculum to address the gaps in some pupils' learning in these areas, most notably disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

### **3.3 Key Stage 5**

The curriculum intent of the sixth form is very much about preparation for adult life and the focus is on helping all students to make a successful transition to their chosen post-18 pathway. Our broad but unashamedly academic curriculum offer in the sixth form comprises over 25 A-level and level 3 technical courses. The range and combination of courses is further enhanced through our commitment to a collaborative curriculum offer with Sheldon School Sixth Form.

All students are expected to study three or four A-level subjects of their choice with an additional qualification as part of the Core Curriculum Programme, with a choice of at least one from the Extended Project Qualification, Level 3 Core Mathematics or the Level 3 Sports Leaders Award. High quality CEIAG from our specialist Careers and Transition Manager, as well as from our experienced Director of Sixth Form, is an essential part of students making well informed decisions about their curriculum. It is also an expectation that all students complete our independent study skills induction programme and participate in weekly community service activities throughout the year.

## **4. CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

The implementation of the curriculum is the methods of teaching and assessment used to deliver the curriculum intent. To achieve this, the school's leaders and teachers strive to:

- recruit, train and develop professionals who work continuously to improve their own subject expertise, knowledge of the courses they teach and pedagogical practice;
- ensure that the curriculum is delivered by subject specialists and that support is provided for staff on the occasions when they may teach outside their main areas of expertise;
- develop a firm and common understanding across all teaching staff of the school's mission and values which underpin the school's curriculum intent and what it means for their practice, as demonstrated by series of lessons across all subjects which contribute well to delivering the curriculum intent;
- create an environment that allows learners to focus on learning;
- design engaging and appropriately challenging learning activities for pupils, over time and across the school, which consistently matches the aims of the curriculum;
- plan coherent and carefully sequenced learning which builds cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment;
- use teaching methods, such as interleaving, spaced learning and retrieval practice, to help learners remember in the long term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts;
- prepare and select resources and materials – in a way that does not create unnecessary workload for staff – which reflect the school's ambitious intentions for the course of study and clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum;
- present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught;
- make effective and systematic use of assessment to check learners' understanding in order to identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback
- use the outcome of assessment to inform and adapt teaching as necessary, without unnecessarily elaborate or differentiated approaches;
- model high standards of speaking, listening and writing to support pupils in developing their own language and vocabulary.

## **5. CURRICULUM IMPACT**

The impact of the curriculum is the outcomes that pupils and students achieve as a result of the quality of education they have received. This will be monitored and evaluated through:

- a wide range of quality assurance activities including lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil, parent and staff surveys;
- rigorous analysis of progress and attainment data, including the performance of pupils and students in national examinations;
- analysis of destinations data to evaluate whether the knowledge, skills and qualifications which pupils and students acquire enable them to progress to the next stage of their education, employment or training which meets their interests and aspirations.

Based on the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum impact, the effectiveness of the curriculum intent will be formally assessed by the Governors Education Committee each time this policy is reviewed. The key question will be discussed, 'is the school curriculum mission, values and intent fit for purpose and serve the needs of all pupils and students?'

## **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **6.1 Governors**

The Education Committee will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold the headteacher to account for its implementation. The Governors will ensure that:

- The school is complying with its funding agreement and teaching a 'broad and balanced curriculum' which includes English, maths and science.
- Sufficient teaching time is provided for pupils and students to cover the requirements of the funding agreement.
- Proper provision is made for pupils with different abilities and needs, including disadvantaged children and those with SEND.
- All courses provided for pupils and students 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.
- Pupils from Year 8 onwards are provided with independent, impartial careers guidance, and that this is appropriately resourced.
- The Curriculum Policy is reviewed at an appropriate frequency.

### **6.2 The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for making sure that this policy is adhered to and that the deputy headteacher with responsibility for curriculum ensures that:

- All required elements of the curriculum, and those subjects which the school chooses to offer, have aims and objectives which reflect the curriculum mission, values and intent of the school and indicate how the needs of individual pupils will be met.
- The school's curriculum intent is clearly defined, communicated and understood by teaching staff.
- There are clear systems in place to monitor the curriculum impact so that the effectiveness of the curriculum intent and implementation can be evaluated.
- The ongoing evaluation of the school's curriculum intent, implementation and impact is documented in the relevant part of the school development plan.
- Strategies are identified to further enhance the quality of education.
- Governors are involved in approving the Leadership Team's decision-making processes that relate to the breadth and balance of the curriculum.
- The amount of time provided for teaching the required elements of the curriculum is adequate and is reviewed by the Governing Body.
- The school's procedures for assessment meet all legal requirements.
- Requests to withdraw children from curriculum subjects are managed efficiently in the best interests of the child.

- Proper provision is in place for pupils with different abilities and needs, including disadvantaged children and those with SEND.

### **6.3 Curriculum Leaders**

Curriculum Leaders are responsible for ensuring that:

- The whole school curriculum mission, values and intent is applied effectively in their subject area.
- They stay abreast of curriculum developments in their subject area and inform the curriculum deputy headteacher of any significant changes e.g. changes in assessment requirements for exam courses etc.
- Leadership, guidance and support is provided to staff within their curriculum team to optimise the implementation of the curriculum.
- Quality assurance systems are followed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum intent, implementation and impact within the subject(s) they are responsible for.
- The ongoing evaluation of their subject(s)'s curriculum intent, implementation and impact is documented in the relevant part of their departmental development plan.
- Strategies are identified to further enhance the quality of education in their subject(s).

### **6.4 Learning Managers**

Learning Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- The whole school curriculum mission, values and intent is applied effectively through the Successful Lives programme.
- Quality assurance systems are followed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum intent, implementation and impact for individual and groups of learners in the key stage or year group(s) they are responsible for.
- Strategies are implemented to address cases where the curriculum offer may need to be personalised in order to best meet the needs of individual pupils and students, including making recommendations to the curriculum deputy headteacher that a pupil may benefit from being disapplied or withdrawn from parts of the curriculum e.g. as part of a Personal Education Plan.

### **6.5 Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that:

- The whole school curriculum mission, values and intent is applied effectively in the lessons they teach.
- They continue to improve their own subject expertise, knowledge of the courses they teach and pedagogical practice.
- They use the most effective methods of teaching and assessment, including those listed in section 4, in order to optimise the implementation and impact of the curriculum.

### **6.6 Pupils and Parents**

Pupils and parents are responsible for ensuring that:

- They engage with the school's curriculum mission through our 'three-way partnership' of school, young person and home.

## **7. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy links with the following policies and procedures:

- Assessment Policy
- KS4 Options Policy
- Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy
- Relations, Sex and Health Education Policy
- Careers Education, Advice and Guidance Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy