



## **Title of Policy: Curriculum**

### **Subtext (if applicable):**

Member of leadership team with lead responsibility for oversight and update of policy	BOU
Approved at SLT	November 2015
Approved at Governing Body	December 2015
Policy review cycle	Annual
Policy review date	December 2016

## **1. Defining the curriculum**

The curriculum consists of all those activities in school, which have an effect on students' learning and development as individuals. The curriculum therefore includes:

- The formal programme of timetabled lessons;
- All extra-curricular and out of school activities;
- The way students and teachers treat each other;
- The organisation, management and leadership of the school.

Since students learn from all these things, they must all be consistent in the aims they set out to achieve and the values on which they are based.

This policy will be concerned principally with the first of these four aspects - the formal programme of timetabled lessons. Homework and out of school activities are subject to the school's *Homework* and *Visits* policies respectively.

## **2. Underlying Principles**

The delivery and content of the curriculum is based on the following principles:

### **Breadth**

A broad curriculum will ensure that students work within all nine areas of learning and experience throughout their main school careers: communication and language; mathematical; scientific and technological; aesthetic and creative; environmental and economic; social and political; spiritual and moral; vocational and recreational; personal effectiveness (see Appendix). Similarly they will continue to develop all four elements of learning – skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge.

### **Balance**

A balanced curriculum will ensure that each area of learning and experience, and each element of learning is given an appropriate time to ensure that it is properly developed.

The balance will of course change for each individual student between KS3/4 and KS4/5, as greater degrees of choice and specialisation are introduced and the curriculum becomes increasingly personalised, focusing more on certain areas than others (see *Differentiation and choice*, below).

### **Coherence, continuity and progression**

A coherent curriculum is one which is designed with the individual student at its centre. Thus work within one area consolidates that within others: mere duplication is avoided, as is omission.

However, coherence is not only concerned with a student's experience across the curriculum at a particular time. The curriculum must also be designed to promote students' development in a continuous and progressive way, as they move through it. Each successive teaching and learning experience must build on what has gone before, while making further demands on students to extend their capabilities.

Progression and continuity must also extend beyond the school, across phases. Our curriculum aims to build on the work of our feeder primary schools. Similarly the Sixth Form aims to prepare students appropriately for courses available in Higher Education institutions.

### **Relevance and purpose**

A relevant curriculum is one that meets the present and prospective needs of students, and is seen by them to do so. Thus, the curriculum must be clearly related to students' personal experience and everyday life, building on their existing knowledge and skills to extend them. Students should always be enabled to make links between what is being taught and their own experience: they should have the opportunity to explore ideas which are new to them in their own terms before being introduced to the technical terms of these ideas. The relevance of the curriculum to adult life and the world of work must similarly be made clear: students must be convinced that what they are learning is genuinely useful. Students' sense that the curriculum is relevant to their needs and concerns will be enhanced if the purpose of each activity is made explicit and explained. Thus, it is essential that all schemes of work identify specific learning objectives, which can be communicated to students.

### **Differentiation and choice – 'personalisation'**

The curriculum must be accurately matched to the individual levels of ability and learning needs of all students to ensure that, within any teaching group, each student is both challenged by the work set, and given the opportunity to succeed at an appropriate level. Thus, if the curriculum is to enable all students to succeed and make progress, it must be differentiated.

Besides responding to students' differing levels of ability, the curriculum must also recognise that they have different interests, aptitudes and aspirations, which become more significant as students grow older and gain in self-knowledge and maturity. It should therefore provide students with a degree of choice in what they study, both within and among subjects, to enable them to pursue these interests, subject to the requirements of breadth and balance, outlined above. This degree of choice should include opportunities to pursue academic and vocational courses.

## **3. The Aims of the Curriculum**

*This section lists those things which we believe our curriculum should seek to achieve. For the most part, we have expressed these aims in terms of the accomplishments, qualities and abilities we wish students to possess when they leave The Polesworth School. In other words, they are the outcomes we intend to produce.*

1. Students should achieve the best results of which they are capable in academic and vocational studies.
2. Students should develop their natural curiosity and excitement in discovery, acquiring a love of learning for its own sake and a desire to continue learning throughout their lives.
3. Students should be able to think critically and independently: to question, to discriminate, to argue logically and to come to their own rational decisions.
4. Students should have a sense of their own worth: self-confidence and self-esteem based on a realistic appraisal of their own talents, interests, strengths and weaknesses.
5. Students should be able to form caring and fulfilling relationships: they should be able to express their own needs, feelings and ideas, empathise with those of others, and resolve conflicts reasonably.
6. Students should explore and develop their own values and ethics, based on respect for themselves and other people, compassion for suffering wherever it occurs and a determination to make a difference to the world, thinking globally and acting locally.
7. Students should be able to put their key skills of communication, numeracy and ICT to effective use in a wide range of situations. They should be able to manage their own learning, understanding their preferred learning style and using a range of study

- skills. They should be able to work constructively with others in a variety of roles, from team member to leader.
8. Students should possess the skills necessary to care for themselves and others, and manage their daily lives and financial affairs.
  9. Students should be able to take their place as active citizens of a modern society, aware of both their rights and responsibilities.
  10. Students should be able to make a useful contribution to a fast-changing technological world, understanding the importance of entrepreneurship and risk-taking.
  11. Students should appreciate cultural and community diversity and reject all forms of prejudice.
  12. Students should be able to express ideas, experiences and emotions through invention, creation and performance.
  13. Students should be able to make aesthetic judgements about the beauty and quality of their own work and that of others. They should appreciate that others may hold different but equally valid judgements.
  14. Students should be able to communicate in at least one modern foreign language.
  15. Students should have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the social, natural and technological worlds in which they live.
  16. Students should be able to adopt a scientific approach to enquiry and investigation. They should have a sound understanding of the physical and natural worlds which surround them and an appreciation of how knowledge about these worlds is acquired and developed.
  17. Students should have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of what contributes to a healthy, balanced life and be equipped to make fulfilling use of their leisure time.
  18. Students should be given opportunities to experience a sense of wonder at the mystery, complexity and beauty of life.
  19. Students should understand all the educational and vocational options open to them.
  20. Students should have an appreciation of humanity's greatest aspirations and achievements, together with an awareness of our darkest moments: they should understand the best and worst of which humanity is capable.
  21. Students should leave The Polesworth School with the conviction that their years here were successful, useful and happy.

### **Core Competencies: Functional skills**

At The Polesworth School, we believe that all students, including those with any additional educational needs, are entitled to experience a curriculum which develops the following competencies. Students at Polesworth should be able:

#### **English**

to listen to, read, understand, interpret and evaluate a wide variety of material for a range of purposes;

to speak and write effectively for a wide variety of purposes and audiences using a range of appropriate forms;

to use and interpret non verbal and graphical means of communication;

to use standard English when appropriate;

#### **Mathematics**

to estimate, measure, collect and record data;

to understand and to formulate accurately relationships expressed in the four operations of arithmetic;

to use, interpret and understand numerical and spatial relationships and graphical and statistical data;

#### **Information Technology**

to select the appropriate IT tools and information sources for a task;

to search for, analyse, process and present information using ICT;  
to model, measure and control external events using ICT;  
to communicate electronically.

### **Skills for Life: *The Autonomous Learner***

The Polesworth School aims in its curriculum to equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in education and the wider world. Namely, we aim to develop all of our young people as:

#### **i. Independent Enquirers**

Young people process and evaluate information in their investigations, planning what to do and how to go about it. They take informed and well-reasoned decisions, recognising that others have different beliefs and attitudes.

#### **ii. Creative Thinkers**

Young people think creatively by generating and exploring ideas, making original connections. They try different ways to tackle a problem, working with others to find imaginative solutions and outcomes that are of value.

#### **iii. Reflective Learners**

Young people evaluate their strengths and limitations, setting themselves realistic goals with criteria for success. They monitor their own performance and progress, inviting feedback from others and making changes to further their learning.

#### **iv. Team Workers**

Young people work confidently with others, adapting to different contexts and taking responsibility for their own part. They listen to and take account of different views. They form collaborative relationships, resolving issues to reach agreed outcomes.

#### **v. Self-Managers**

Young people organise themselves, showing personal responsibility, initiative, creativity and enterprise with a commitment to learning and self-improvement. They actively embrace change, responding positively to new priorities, coping with challenges and looking for opportunities.

#### **vi. Effective Participators**

Young people actively engage with issues that affect them and those around them. They play a full part in the life of their school, college, workplace or wider community by taking responsible action to bring improvements for others as well as themselves.

## **4. Curriculum Content and Organisation**

### **Teaching Week**

The curriculum consists of five one-hour lessons a day and is timetabled over a two week period. In addition there is one twenty-five minute session per day in which the school's tutorial programme and House Assemblies take place.

### **Content: Years 7-9**

All students in Years 7-9 study a core of 13 subjects. All students study French or German. In English, English Literature, Mathematics, Science, French, German and Religious Studies, students begin work on GCSE and/or BTEC Level 2 courses at points during Year 9. The breakdown in terms of curriculum time is as follows:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	14%	14%	12%
Mathematics	14%	12%	12%
Science	14%	12%	12%
Technology	8%	10%	8%
Computing	2%	4%	2%
Language(s)	10%	10%	10%
Religious Studies	4%	4%	6%
History	8%	6%	8%
Geography	6%	8%	8%
Drama	2%	2%	2%
Music	6%	4%	6%
Art	4%	6%	6%
Physical Education	8%	8%	8%

At the end of Year 8, those students who are unlikely to succeed in a language and/or have significant weaknesses in basic literacy and/or numeracy are withdrawn from languages in order to take up an alternative curriculum from the beginning of Year 9. These students follow a curriculum of literacy, numeracy, employability and life skills through Years 9-11 in place of a language.

#### Content: Years 10 and 11

In Years 10 -11 all students study a core of seven to ten subjects which aim to provide our young people with a broad and balanced diet. Students are also able to pursue two further courses of their choice which allows for a degree of specialization according to students' interests and aptitudes. The breakdown in terms of curriculum time is as follows:

	Years 10 and 11
<b>THE CORE:</b>	
English Language and English Literature: GCSEs	16%
Mathematics: GCSE (plus Statistics GCSE for the most able)	16%
Science: GCSEs (Physics, Chemistry and Biology or Double Science)	20%
Languages: GCSE or Alternative Curriculum	9%
Religious Studies: GCSE	6%
Physical Education (core, non-examined)	6%
Geography or History: GCSE	9%
<b>OPTION SUBJECTS (TWO FROM):</b>	
Art and Design: GCSE	2 x 9% = 18%
Art – Mixed Media: GCSE	
Business Studies: GCSE or BTEC Level 2	
Child Development: GCSE	
Classical Civilisation: GCSE	
Computer Science: GCSE	
Drama: GCSE	
Food Technology: GCSE	
Geography: GCSE	
History: GCSE	
Music: BTEC Level 2	
Physical Education: GCSE	
Product Design: GCSE	
Resistant Materials: GCSE	
Sociology: GCSE	
Textiles Technology: GCSE	
Travel and Tourism: BTEC Level 2	

### **Content: Years 12 and 13 (The Sixth Form)**

Sixth Form students at The Polesworth School follow a curriculum of four courses of their choice in Year 12. In Year 13, students typically pursue their studies in all four of their chosen courses although some students may reduce their timetable to three courses where appropriate at the discretion of the Director of Post-16 Studies. All optional courses operate on a standard 10 lessons per fortnight (20% of curriculum time). The options currently offered to students are:

**Applied Science (Applied AS/A Level)**  
**Art (AS/A Level)**  
**Biology (AS/A Level)**  
**Business Studies (AS/A Level)**  
**Chemistry (AS/A Level)**  
**Classical Civilisations (AS/A Level)**  
**Design and Technology (AS/A Level)**  
**Economics (AS/A Level)**  
**English Literature (AS/A Level)**  
**French (AS/A Level)**  
**Further Mathematics (AS/A Level)** (Must be taken alongside Mathematics and is subject to additional entry requirements)  
**Geography (AS/A Level)**  
**German (AS/A Level)**  
**Government and Politics (AS/A Level)**  
**History (AS/A Level)**  
**Home Economics (AS/A Level)**  
**Information Technology (AS/A Level)**  
**Mathematics (AS/A Level)**  
**Media Studies (AS/A Level)**  
**Music (BTEC Level 3)**  
**Philosophy and Ethics (AS/A Level)**  
**Physical Education (AS/A Level)**  
**Physics (AS/A Level)**  
**Psychology (AS/A Level)**  
**Sociology (AS/A Level)**  
**Textiles (AS/A Level)**  
**Theatre Studies (AS/A Level)**  
**Travel and Tourism (BTEC Level 3)**  
**World Development (AS/A Level)**

Those students who, on entry to the Sixth Form, have not attained a C grade in Mathematics study an intensive course in this subject, leading to re-take in the following November.

### **Homework**

Students at The Polesworth School are expected to complete a wide variety of homework tasks across the curriculum. Homework is designed to reinforce and supplement what is learnt in lessons and to help students to develop skills of self-management and independent learning. More detail can be found in the school's *Homework Policy*.

### **Careers Education**

All students from Year 7 to Year 13 at The Polesworth School follow a course of Careers Education as described in the school's *Careers Policy*.

### **The Tutorial Programme**

All students at The Polesworth School attend a twenty-five minute tutorial session four times a week. This session, delivered in mixed-age tutor groups, contains aspects of Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Education, Citizenship, Literacy, Numeracy, Health Education,

Internationalism and Careers. This is delivered through a programme, The School of Character, which is guided by The Jubilee Centre of The University of Birmingham.

In addition, three topic-specific timetabled days support this work.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Entry to all programmes of study is based on academic suitability and appropriateness, regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief.

Disabilities: In accordance with the statutory requirements the school aims to make the curriculum accessible to all pupils as far as is reasonably practicable. The school has an Accessibility Plan, which is available to parents on request.

### **Special Educational Needs**

The school has a *Special Educational Needs Policy* for relevant pupils. The school will determine the most appropriate courses of action in consultation with parents.

### **Religious Education**

Religious Education is available to all pupils. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education

### **Sex Education**

The school provides sex education in the basic curriculum for all pupils, in which pupils are encouraged and guided by moral principles and taught to recognise the value of family life.

A full statement of the school's *Sex Education Policy* is available to parents. In accordance with the law the biological aspects of human reproduction remain compulsory for all pupils, but parents may withdraw their children from any other part of the sex education provided without giving reasons.

### **Collective Worship**

A full statement of the school's *Collective Worship Policy* is available to parents.

### **Political Education**

The promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school is forbidden by law. Political issues are introduced in a number of courses, including in the school's Citizenship element of the School of Character Programme, and are presented in a balanced manner. The school takes seriously its obligation to play a part in preventing radicalization. Our approach is detailed in our *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*.

### **Disapplication**

In accordance with the law the school has the right to respond to individual needs by modifying programmes, or disapplying students from subjects/areas of study for the duration of Key Stage 4, to:

- allow a pupil to participate in extended work-related learning;
- allow a pupil with individual strengths to emphasise a particular curriculum area;
- allow a pupil making significantly less progress than other pupils of his/her age to consolidate his/her learning and progress across the curriculum.

Decisions on any of the above will only ever be taken on an individual basis.

## **5. Concerns and Complaints**

Parents who have concerns about any aspect of the curriculum should discuss these in the first instance with the pupil's tutor, Head of House or Assistant Head of House. Subject-specific issues may be raised with the relevant Head of Department.



The school has a Complaints Procedure in place, which can be obtained from the school Reception and is available online on the school website.